metalsmith
ART DESIGN JEWELRY METAL

Out of the Dark

Matter and Meaning

Silver Linings

Objects at Hand

$9.00 USA & CAN | SNAGMETALSMITH.ORG

metalsmith

CONTENTS VOL.36/NO.1

For related content visit *Metalsmith* EXTRA!
at www.snagmetalsmith.org

JOOST DURING
Twist Bowls, ca. 2010
sterling silver
dimensions variable
(SEE FEATURE ON PAGE 42)

4 **Foreword**

UNDER THE COVERS

16 **Place and Adornment: A History of Contemporary Jewellery in Australia and New Zealand**
MARJORIE SIMON

IN PRODUCTION

18 **Giselle Kolb**
ANDREA DINOTO

IN THE STUDIO

20 **Tiff Massey**
RENEE C. HOOGLAND

LOOK

22 **Andy Cooperman**

IN MEMORIAM

62 **Fred Woell**

FEATURES

26 **Between Object and Idea: The Jewelry of Timothy Veske-McMahon**
Like Alice in Wonderland, Timothy Veske-McMahon's works inhabit a world of inversion, distortion, and play.
TONI GREENBAUM

34 **Out of the Darkness: The Visions of Kadri Mälk**
Emerging from the depths of her spiritual quest, Kadri Mälk's jewelry exerts a powerful, albeit mysterious, pull.
URSULA ILSE-NEUMAN

42 **The Function of Silver: Joost During**
Joost During orchestrates the balance between form and function to produce objects of pleasurable usefulness.
PATRICIA HARRIS AND DAVID LYON

50 **Bernard Schobinger: Meaning in Every Material**
By harnessing the latent energy in varied materials, Bernard Schobinger has created an unexpected jewelry oeuvre.
LIESBETH DEN BESTEN

REVIEWS

58 **The Enchanting Jewels of Elizabeth Gage**
PATRICIA HARRIS AND DAVID LYON

59 **Melanie Isverding: In Other Smiles**
ROSANNE RAAB

60 **CITY/NATURE**
ANDREA DINOTO

Cover:
TIMOTHY VESKE-MCMAHON
Glyph VIII, 2015
repurposed plastic, aluminum
15 ¾ x 15 ¾ x 1 ⅛"
(SEE FEATURE ON PAGE 26)

FOREWORD

THINGS ARE NOT always as they seem in this issue of *Metalsmith,* with many of the featured artists trafficking in illusion or mystery. Our cover story on Timothy Veske-McMahon sets the tone, aptly citing Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland & Through the Looking Glass.* Like mirror reflections, which appear deceptively accurate while actually reversing their subjects, Veske-McMahon's jewelry gives a slyly disorienting twist to familiar items. About his works, Toni Greenbaum writes, "They distort the characteristics of common objects, offering inversions as certitudes."

Actual mirrors are enlisted by Tiff Massey, whose work and Detroit studio are profiled here. Her multimedia piece *Whatdupdoe* includes framed mirror-masks that reference the reflective glass on General Motors's Detroit headquarters. Viewers gazing at the masks become the distorted face in the mirror and, by extension, are implicated in the city's contested urban landscape and political spin. Massey's "Vanity" series also uses shiny surfaces that reflect passersby, as they, in turn, reflect upon the condition of narcissism and self-absorption.

The works of Estonian artist Kadri Mälk offer a compelling reversal of our notions of light and dark. For Mälk, "Life is actually a dark space. And the shadow is the queen of colors." From this shadowy realm, Mälk issues forth resonant and potent jewelry that ultimately serves to illuminate the mysteriousness of life. "There is often no clear-cut line between reality and imagination," says Mälk. "Sometimes the invisible might turn out to be more real than the visible."

"Curiouser and curiouser," exclaims Alice at the strange spectacles she encounters in the fictional Wonderland. We, too, are invited to marvel at the truthful oddities and deceptive certainties presented herein. Together these works take us beyond the page and through the looking glass into a world of new, often unsettling, possibilities.

SUZANNE RAMLJAK
EDITOR

The mission of *Metalsmith* magazine is to document, analyze, and promote excellence in jewelry and metalsmithing. In fulfillment of the goal of producing a significant document of the field, editorial content will emphasize contemporary activities and ideas, with supportive content to include relevant historical work and critical issues.

metalsmith

Published by the Society of North American Goldsmiths

Artists. Designers. Jewelers. Metalsmiths.
www.snagmetalsmith.org

EDITOR Suzanne Ramljak
editor@snagmetalsmith.org
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR Kate Fogarty
GRAPHIC DESIGN Luke Hayman, Ellen Peterson, Pentagram

EDITORIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Angela Bubash, Melissa Cameron, Suzanne Pugh, Biba Schutz, Cindi Strauss

ADVERTISING John Garbett, jgarbett@snagmetalsmith.org

PRINTER Royle Printing
Committed to using environmentally friendly materials and methods.

SNAG EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Gwynne Rukenbrod Smith

SNAG BOARD OF DIRECTORS
PRESIDENT Nicole Jacquard
PAST PRESIDENT Renee Zettle-Sterling
TREASURER Anne Havel
SECRETARY Becky McDonah

Chris Balch, Dominique Bereiter, Jim Bove, Sydney Brown, Angela Bubash, Kat Cole, Dianne deBeixedon, Brian Ferrell, Brigitte Martin, Tedd McDonah, Lauren Selden, April Wood

Metalsmith (ISSN 0270-1146) is published both in print and digital formats in January, March, June, August, and October by SNAG, PO Box 1355, Eugene, OR 97440, 541-345-5689, www.snagmetalsmith.org.

Membership rates $85/year and up, full membership includes five-issue subscription to *Metalsmith*. Special student rates. Subscription to only *Metalsmith*: $31/year and up.

POSTMASTER/MEMBERS/SUBSCRIBERS/COPIES
Metalsmith is not forwarded by the post office. Send all address changes and any other requests, including missing issues, to SNAG, PO Box 1355, Eugene, OR 97440, 541-345-5689, info@snagmetalsmith.org. Claims for missing issues are accepted only if received within three months of publication.

The opinions expressed in *Metalsmith* are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the staff or directors of SNAG or *Metalsmith*.

Metalsmith is indexed in the Art Index and EBSCO Media. Newsstand distribution: COMAG Marketing Group, 155 Village Blvd, Princeton, NJ 08540.

Copyright 2015 by Society of North American Goldsmiths, all rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written consent is prohibited.

Printed in the U.S.A.

Place and Adornment: A History of Contemporary Jewellery in Australia and New Zealand

DAMIAN SKINNERAND KEVIN MURRAY
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII PRESS, HONOLULU, 2014
BY MARJORIE SIMON

THERE IS MUCH to learn from *Place and Adornment,* not least being the term "Aotearea," the native Maori word for New Zealand. New to this antipodean reader, its inclusion signals at the outset recognition of the country's proud bi-culturalism. Authors Damian Skinner, art historian and curator of Applied Art and Design at the Auckland War Memorial Museum Tamaki Paenga Hira, and Kevin Murray, writer and Adjunct Professor, RMIT University School of Art, Melbourne, are both active participants in the global conversation about contemporary jewelry. Here they compare and contrast the evolution of jewelry traditions in their respective countries over the past half-century, showing what the two varieties of Australasian jewelry share and how they diverge.

The nomadic Aboriginals, who had occupied their vast territory for 40,000 years, apparently reserved body adornment for special, ritualized settings, while the sedentary Maori newcomers, arriving in 1250–1300 CE, brought with them their jewelry and ornamental traditions from Polynesian Pacific cultures. They developed jewelry made of local vegetal matter and animal skins, teeth, feathers, and shells, leading to the regional movement known as "Bone, Stone and Shell." From the mid-19th century, and with different outcomes, Anglo colonials invaded them both.

Expanding on material introduced by Skinner in the 2013 book *Contemporary Jewelry in Perspective,* the authors begin by setting out their salient issues: first, place, specifically Australasia, with its unique environment, history, and cultures. A connecting thread in Australasia is the theme of "primitivism," which is elsewhere becoming a discarded concept, and the interface of indigenous and Anglo "settler" mores, including of course, cultural appropriation. They address the social location of jewelry in society, the critique of preciousness in contemporary jewelry, the definition of "studio jewelry" ("jewellery designed and fabricated by the same person within a studio or small workshop setting…"), as well as conceptual, theoretical, and ethical concerns of contemporary jewelers.

One of the book's strengths is introducing, no matter how briefly, a community of artists likely to be unknown to "northerners."

According to Skinner and Murray, Pakeha (New Zealanders of European origin) artists didn't make much use of indigenous materials until the arrival of a small group of Europeans in the 1960s, when the trend toward democratization of materials favored greater visibility of New Zealand jewelry. In a way, Australia's rise to contemporary international prominence is something of a conundrum. It had no constructive dialogue with its indigenous culture and it was populated with the unadorned, i.e. convicts. But a 19th-century influx of European jewelers changed that: they brought with them a European aesthetic in working the plentiful gold found there. "Where Australian jewelers pursued an outward connection with the international scene, their New Zealand counterparts sought to emphasize their distinctive differences to what was happening overseas," the book maintains. In a word, Australians have ignored indigenous materials, while Pakeha have embraced them. This declarative statement at the end of the book is the clearest description of the Australasian divide.

Further separation was abetted by a 1982 visit by renowned German goldsmith Hermann Jünger. Its impact was, in the words of the authors, epic. This formative contact, cemented by the migration of Australians to Munich for study, "would prove to be one of the dominant forces in the growth of Australian jewellery," especially in Melbourne.[1] However, as "the jewellery scene in Aotearoa New Zealand had none of the coherence of Australia," and not all of the major figures were receptive to Jünger's visit or message, most New Zealanders continued to celebrate their regionalism, while many Australians went on to become active artists in Europe.

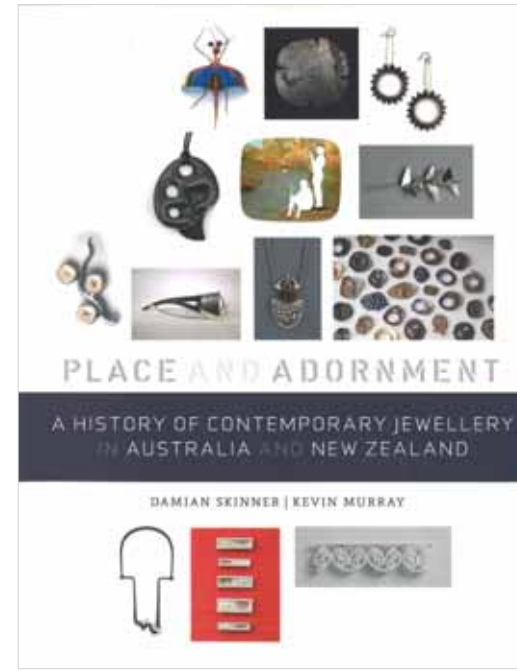
One of the book's strengths is introducing, no matter how briefly, a community of artists likely to be unknown to "northerners," starting with figures such as Alan Preston and the founders of Fingers Gallery. However, readers looking for iconic work by renowned

artists are likely to be disappointed, for many are represented by lesser examples, and images of the work of others are omitted altogether. In fact, images are generally modest in size, signaling that this serious volume is not a coffee-table accessory. Better to treat the book as an introductory textbook and track down the unfamiliar artists online to see the exciting range of their work, from the many well-known Australian artists and "National Treasures" to a dozen or more mostly unknown Pakeha modernists who form the backbone of Aotearoa New Zealand's jewelry heritage.

Aotearoa terms are used wherever possible, possibly to the confusion of non-native readers. To understand the phrase "brooches are plaited and woven from pingao, kiekie and harakeke," I had to look up the untranslated words to learn about three varieties of native plants highly valued for weaving. I also noted the following errors: misidentification of the prolific writer, teacher, and goldsmith Charles Lewton-Brain (not Lutenbrain), whose technique of fold forming (not gold forming) has been widely taught to several generations of students. And can one dimension of Peter Deckers's *Rings* really be 350mm? Should mention of "sheering camps" be "shearing"?

The collaboration between Skinner and Murray seems to have coalesced their individual writing styles. Good examples of their distinctive voices are Skinner's delightful *Pocket Guide to New Zealand Jewelry* and Murray's essay "The Low and High Road in Australian Jewellery" in *The Treasure Room—Australia.* Skinner's excellent essay in Warwick Freeman's exhibition catalogue *Given* deserves more space than can be given in *Place and Adornment* or here, unfortunately, but it contains the germs of provocative discussions about place, identity, and adornment. For example, is bicultural Pakeha jewelry a critique of appropriation or just appropriation?

Other questions that came to mind: Is it true that "jewellery is a craft practice and heavily indebted to the source book or pattern book, in which motifs are pulled from their cultural contexts and turned into formal designs?" Isolating and decontextualizing motifs is common practice in the decorative arts in general, from Islamic patterns to William Morris wallpaper and textiles. Is it, then, a "craft practice"? Does this imply that all craft practice is inherently appropriative? On the other hand, the problem of "indigenization" is a real one, and the tension between the colonizing (settler) culture and indigenous (colonized) is universal and unresolved. The authors best articulate this tangled process late in the book, after readers have seen for themselves what jewelry from Aotearoa New Zealand looks like.



One needn't always agree with Skinner and Murray—I scribbled numerous arguments and rebuttals while reading their book—to know that they have raised equally numerous questions worth considering. Ultimately they seek to use craft in general and jewelry in particular as a lens through which to examine the multicultural pan-Pacific (Tagata Pasifika) culture. It would be radical indeed to bring jewelry into the bigger conversation about appropriation in the arts, since it has tended to focus on painting. In the end, the authors pose a series of questions resonant to Australasian artists: "How can settler identity evolve beyond nostalgia and guilt? In what ways can indigenous jewellery transcend the exotic?" I also ask, Will global attention soon turn from Europe to the Pacific?

Skinner and Murray claim to have written a "tendentious volume." I'm inclined to agree. I quote a review of Francis Pound's *The Invention of New Zealand: Art and National Identity 1930-1970,* that, in the best possible way, "this is a work that will start a lot of useful and enjoyable arguments."[2]

Marjorie Simon is a metalsmith and writer residing in Philadelphia.

---

1. Dick Richards's essay for Julie Blyfield, known for her chased and repoussed Australian flora, gives a brief general background on the 19th-century German influence on South Australian jewelry.
2. http://nzbooks.org.nz/2010/non-fiction/knocking-the-nationalists-hugh-roberts/. Review by Hugh Roberts in *New Zealand Books*

Giselle Kolb
Andean Inspirations

BY ANDREA DINOTO

GISELLE KOLB'S "TRADEMARK" JEWEL is a stylized, brightly enameled flower set in a box of blackened silver or gleaming gold. It's a striking design, distinctively modern yet appealingly naïve, and that's no accident. The boxed floral form is derived from an Andean folk art tradition known as *retalbo:* carved and painted wooden boxes, many with hinged doors that open to display a religious event or a scene of everyday life. A native of Lima, Peru, Kolb grew up with a deep appreciation of the *retalbo* artists, who would typically decorate their boxes with relief-carved flowers and vines. Now 45 and mother of two young children, Kolb took a circuitous route to jewelry making. "I grew up in a normal, average family," she says of her Lima childhood. Her father is an architect and town planner; her mother studied anthropology; and Kolb herself attended the Catholic University of Peru, where she studied both English and art, graduating with a degree in graphic design.

In the 1990s, on vacation in Venezuela, she met her future husband, an American

Kolb admits that with running a business and raising children she has no time for social media.

Ph.D. candidate who was teaching physics and math abroad. "I decided to follow him back to Maryland while he studied," she says, "and thought I'd get involved in graphic design at MICA (Maryland Institute College of Art)." But in truth, Kolb did not enjoy the classes. "I felt out of touch with everything," she says, "and I didn't know anybody." But then she noticed a jewelry program offered in the school's catalogue and thought she would treat herself. Fact was, jewelry had always interested her, but in Peru, "while there were crafters everywhere," she says, "there were no jewelry schools."

At MICA, Kolb finished the certification program and thereafter apprenticed to jewelers in the area. She especially treasures the time she spent working with Vladimir Iosem, a Russian jeweler who taught her "things you don't learn at school, like how to make the most out of the metal you have, how to really work one on one with a customer," she says. After three years, Kolb switched to working as an assistant to a number of artists who participated in ACC craft shows, helping them set up and sell and generally learning the ropes. In 2002, she applied for a vendor's license and started producing her own jewelry from a home studio. She describes her original work as looking like an actual *retalbo:* "a little box with vines arranged inside so that if you pulled them out they became earrings."

Kolb's first actual retail experience was a Delaware street fair on a hot summer day, with no tent provided. For her next outdoor show, Baltimore's "Artscapes," she was prepared, not only with a tent, but with work at lower price points. In 2005, pregnant with her first child, she did her first

Giselle Kolb at the 2015 America Craft Exposition Show, at Chicago Botanic Garden in Glencoe, Illinois.

ACC show entirely on her own, and remembers thinking: "What, am I crazy?" Kolb now does only one show—an ACC show—a year, but also sells through galleries, the website Artful Home, and her own website. She works as well with several private clients, women she has met through the ACC shows and who have become friends; but she also makes jewelry for one "older gentleman" who discovered her online. "He called to talk and ordered a pair of dangle earrings for his wife that he wanted set with his own rubies," she says. Kolb admits that with running a business and raising children she has no time for social media—in fact she much prefers personal connections to Facebook "likes"—and carefully apportions her time so that she can make all the work herself, plus travel to shows, with no assistants (although her mom sometimes comes from Peru to babysit).

Kolb's work has evolved, she says, while retaining its floral *retalbo* inspirations. "I have added more color with the years," she explains, "and I'm now using more gold and precious stones to combine with the enamel, but also glass, cabochons, resin, and Tahitian pearls." Kolb views her boxed flowers as "symbols of appreciation… offerings…tributes," all of which reflects her stated belief that "natural beauty exists to be contemplated and admired." It's clear that her clientele agrees. Even during 2015's big snowstorm, a group of her friends showed up at the ACC Baltimore show. Says Kolb: "It's that kind of thing that brightens your life."

Andrea DiNoto is a New York–based writer on art, craft, and design.

Necklace in Green, Blue and Yellow, 2015
oxidized sterling silver,fine silver, glass, vitreous enamel, 18k gold, fresh water pearls, diamonds, tourmaline, cubic zirconia, sapphire, resin
length 20"

Cupcake Rings, 2012
oxidized sterling silver, fine silver, vitreous enamel, pearls, turquoise
each 1 x 1 x 1"

Furthermore:
www.gisellekolb.com

Tiff Massey

BY RENEE C. HOOGLAND

Tiff Massey in front of Detroit's Renaissance Center adorned with examples from her "Vanity" series
PHOTO: AKFAORO

"A YEAR AGO I could not have afforded this," says Tiff Massey of her newly rented studio space in a red brick warehouse building just off Jefferson Street in downtown Detroit. The front of the building faces a debris-strewn field, but Massey's ground-floor corner loft also overlooks the Detroit River and the beautiful Belle Isle, a 982-acre island between the United States and Canada shores. Massey moved into the split-level loft several months ago, but when I visit her on a hot yet gorgeous summer day, she is working in a sweltering open space with only a small fan buzzing in the corner. Complete with hardwood floors, high ceilings, and exposed brick walls, the loft looks nothing like the "custom lofts" nowadays often featured on Detroit real estate sites to attract artsy young urbanites to the (barely) no-longer-bankrupt city. An enormous beanbag serves as a kind of couch. There is a folding chair and the artist's stool behind her big workbench, which is covered with tools and materials, and there are various side tables, also piled with leather, metal, fabric, finished work, drawings, and odds and ends. The studio space is bisected by a broad staircase leading to the second floor, which houses a kitchen, two small rooms, and a large bedroom—which, apart from a pile of clothes and shoes, has only a mattress sitting on the floor. Ultimately, Massey tells me, she intends to use part of the studio space as a classroom for jewelry workshops, and the small rooms upstairs as a residency for jewelers. Right now, she is just "camping out." We drink water from plastic cups. Massey is working.

Massey is a jeweler and mixed-media artist who graduated with an MFA in art jewelry and metalsmithing from the Cranbrook Academy of Art in 2011. She received her undergraduate degree in biology, taking metalsmithing classes between biology and chemistry to "keep sane," from Eastern Michigan University. She chose to pursue a Bachelor of Science degree so as not to have to "struggle." Metalsmithing proved a stronger passion. As down-to-earth and realistic as Massey is about a career that may not strike everybody as the most lucrative, she is driven by her own need to create contemporary art jewelry, which often translates into wearable sculpture and objects, as well as large site-specific installations. All of her work stems from an interest in an African-American diasporic perspective on race and class in contemporary society and on life in Detroit.

On Massey's floor and side tables are parts of her solo show, "Vanity," which took place at Re:View (now Simone DeSousa Gallery) in Detroit's midtown area in 2014. On view were large brass-colored necklaces and variously configured tapestries of multifaceted steel bricks that resemble bars of gold. The jewelry at once suggests the socially, aesthetically, and spiritually significant techniques of traditional regal African hairstyling and the big and bold design of 1980s hip-hop jewelry. Their merger in the braided, spiraling, sculptural yet wearable pieces on exhibit in "Vanity" explores the complexity of diasporic meanings of self, in a world in which what counts as precious is both subject to change and marked by race and class distinctions.

"My dad purchased custom jewelry," says Massey. "He liked taking me to stores where there were floors and floors of gold and diamonds, in endless varieties of settings and shapes and colors. They formed a language of their own." What interests Massey is the ways in which objects operate in relation to our bodies: Like the bling and custom jewelry, her own jewelry pieces are to be touched, worn, and should cause us to reflect on ourselves and who we are in the world. These works are no trinkets: "It is about movement, work that is bigger than the body, about increasing the scale, work that is bigger than me," says Massey. Shiny, gemlike wall pieces shaped like gold bars that, in their different configurations, act as mirrors, occasion vanity, reflecting ourselves back at ourselves, fragmented, literally offering (self-) reflection and, as works in a space of public viewing, a reflection upon reflection.

Massey is working on a new body of work, titled "Whatupdoe," to be included in a group show in Lille, France, which is part of an art and culture festival taking place from September 2015 through January 2016 called "Lille3000: Urban Renaissance." "Whatdupdoe" consists of a wall projection of a large quilt-like sculpture, jewelry, and several window installations, a series

What interests Massey is the ways in which objects operate in relation to our bodies.

Tiff Massey in her downtown Detroit studio
PHOTO: AKFAORO

of framed mirror-masks inspired by the skyline of Detroit, with the big Renaissance Center (the RenCen as it is locally known) as its centerpiece, all in black and white. The RenCen is a group of seven interconnected skyscrapers in downtown Detroit located on the Riverfront, which is used by General Motors as its world headquarters. The complex includes a shopping center, restaurants, brokerage firms, banks, and private clubs, and has therefore been called a city within a city. Designed by John Portman, the towers of the RenCen are covered in reflective glass, and, for Massey, symbolize the distorted perspectives that (predominantly white) people have of Detroit looking in from the outside, on the (largely black) people who live and love and work and play and struggle in the city itself.

The mirror window installations once again force the viewer to reflect on the thin but crucial line between scrutiny and voyeurism. They pose poignant questions about lives (that matter or don't), about class, about race, about poverty, about callous and corrupt politicians, about gentrification. In Massey's window masks, "you're the one that is it: you're in it—in the skyline of Detroit," she says—and there is no escaping your role and your responsibility. "Whatdupdoe" is about flight and reverse flight, about the (re)branding of Detroit in the service of the commercial success of white people coming back in, while black people who could not afford to leave continue to suffer. Distorted views of the "comeback" city, or its renaissance, indeed.

Massey is on a roll. She recently was awarded a Kresge Award in the Visual Arts, and is currently a finalist for an equally prestigious share in the $3 million in prize money of the 2015 Knight Arts Challenge. The Knight Foundation posed the question: "What's your best idea for the arts in Detroit?" Of 1,000 responses, only 70 were finalists. When I ask her how she feels about getting money and support from such "established" (largely white and upper middle class) sources, she laughs and says: "I say, thank you very much. I am just enjoying the ride—these are baby steps. Awards allow me the take my work to the next level: I have been crawling and walking, and all I am looking forward to is being able to run and to sprint."

---

renée c. hoogland is Professor of English at Wayne State University in Detroit. Her most recent book is A Violent Embrace: Art and Aesthetics after Representation.

Furthermore:
www.tiffmassey.com

Andy Cooperman

YEARS AGO, AS enamelist June Schwartz and I gazed at two neckpieces at an exhibition opening, she said, "I really like this…but I *covet* that." The idea of coveting something as a means to distinguish the sublime is a good one. And that has been my curatorial rudder here.

My "look" around the field afforded me an opportunity to really dig and get excited again about what people are doing and have done. I don't really care if a piece is metalcentric, or whether it's high-tech or old-school. If a thing is good, I feel something inside move and it merits a shout-out. If it's really special, then it's something that I covet, as I do every one of these objects. Actually, it's not the objects themselves that I covet. I don't need to *have* them. They are not pieces that I could make or that I would necessarily want to make, and they may be the only piece of an artist that I like. What I covet is the commitment to making, to going the distance. I covet the ability of each artist to just *get it right* in a way that would never in a million years occur to me. (Or so *wrong*, as in Tobias Alm's *Hammers*.)

That's why Sara Owens's felted sink strainer can exist here alongside the technical rigor of Namu Cho's bracelet, or why Jim Cotter's concrete thinking on the cocktail ring is in line with Katie Poterala's CAD-created *Geologae Brilliotara* ring. A thread runs through this varied collection that connects to something in me but could never come *from* me. It's a big, broad field, and I covet that diversity and the mojo that each maker brings to the table.

Andy Cooperman is a metalsmith, teacher, and writer living in Seattle.

SETH GOULD
Hammer Study: Planishing Hammer No.3, 2011
steel, hickory
24 ½ x 24 ½ x 1"

TOBIAS ALM
The Hammers, 2015
silicone, cotton, wood, steel
dimensions variable

SARA OWENS
Nest, 2010
wool, sink drain filter, brass
diameter 2 ½"

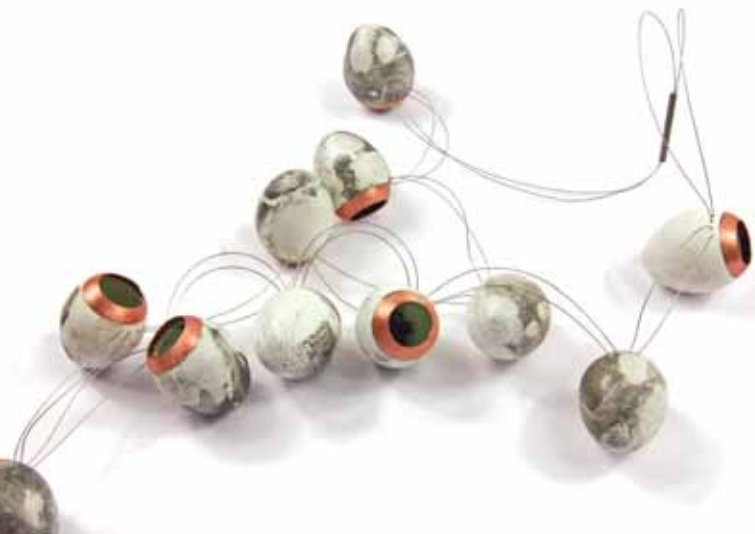
NAMU CHO
NB04, 2011
24k gold, sterling silver, diamonds
1 x 2"
PHOTO: MARK NANTZ

JIM COTTER
Ring, 2014
sterling silver, 14k gold, steel, cement, amethyst

KATIE POTERALA
Geologae Brilliotara no. 005, 2010
plaster, Cyanoacrylate, cubic zirconia, aluminum (3D printed), tube set
2 x 2 x 1"
PHOTO: KATIE POTERALA

NATALYA PINCHUK
Growth Series, 2009
wool, silver, copper, enamel,
plastic, leather, waxed
thread, stainless steel, 22k gold
11 x 4 ½ x 1 ½"

LINDA THREADGILL
Rosette Brooch 18-11, 2011
copper, brass, polymer
4 ¼ x 3 ¾ x 1 ¼"
PHOTO: JAMES THREADGILL



ANJA EICHLER
Collier, 2014
quail eggs (hardened), copper,
oxidized silver, steel wire
length approx 31 ½"
PHOTO: ANJA EICHLER

TERHI TALVENAN
Ronde Stipjes, 2005
rowan wood, paint, silver
diameter 7"
PHOTO: EDDO HARTMANN

CRANE
The Teacher's Pet (pin), 2013
18k yellow gold, sterling silver,
black pearls, bell (body)
approx 2 ¾ x ¾"

Between Object and Idea

Teem IX, 2015
nylon, dye, pigment
3 ⅛ x 3 ⅛ x 2"

The Jewelry of Timothy Veske-McMahon

BY TONI GREENBAUM

Teem XI, 2015
nylon, pigment
5 ⅛ x 5 ⅞ x 1 ⅛"

TIMOTHY VESKE-MCMAHON INVESTIGATES the space between reality and fantasy, material and ephemeral, substance and symbol, exploration and revelation. Using materials and tropes harvested from personal experience—what he terms "oneselfishedness"—Veske-McMahon makes jewelry that speaks of "the delicate balance of adult life."[1] Through collectively recognized logograms, he prompts us to view the truth from different perspectives in order to debunk fundamental assumptions: "A boy is like a boy, a marriage is like a marriage, and hunger is like hunger."[2] The results are mysterious, provocative, eloquent, and universal.

Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There by Lewis Carroll provides a fitting metaphor for Veske-McMahon's practice. In the opening passages, Alice disputes the tableau she glimpses within her drawing room mirror. Like Alice, Veske-McMahon realizes that mirrors do not reflect but rather reverse what is placed before them, presenting a world that is backwards. A mirror is something we take for granted as conveying fact, but it gives false representation. "We seek out and delve into mirrors for clarifying affirmation," he states, "but…are met with a foreign body [taking] hold of our sense of familiarity, slyly perpetuating an alienating sense of self."[3] In his artist's statement for "Mirror Milk,"[4] a recent exhibition at Brooklyn Metalworks, Veske-McMahon writes: "[The] perceived closeness of similarity and familiarity is a deception. A fictitious shorthand we use in identifying ourselves within society and relationships."[5] His jewels, likewise, question what is real; they distort the characteristics of common objects, offering inversions as certitudes.

In 2012, inspired by contemporary Estonian jewelry, particularly that of Tanel Veenre, as well as encouragement from Iris Eichenberg, head of the metals department at Cranbrook Academy of Art, where he was pursuing a MFA, Veske-McMahon visited Tallinn for two months, renting bench space in a collective studio and "just walking around." He was captivated by the local building vernacular, which features drain pipes, ornate, brightly colored doors, and ironwork, and that visual integrity, along with his lack of funds and access to metalsmithing supplies, inspired him to experiment with readily

Sloom I, 2012
aluminum, veneer, powdercoating
4 x 3 ⅛ x 2 ⅜"

Sloom II, 2012
aluminum, veneer, powdercoating
5 ⅛ x 2 x 1 ⅝"

Teem XII, 2015
nylon, dye, pigment
4 ½ x 3 ⅛ x ¾"

available materials. He sawed cheap aluminum stock into flat shapes that recall kayak paddles, drilling them with holes to evoke the patterns found on brushes. The shapes were annealed, bent, and spray-painted to form "speculative objects," titled "Sloom," an old English word for "slumber," a state where everything is experienced slightly off kilter. As a result of their folded position, these works maintain a condition of perpetual self-observation, as well as the illusion of reflexive encounter with an entity having no front or back.

Upon his return to Cranbrook, Veske-McMahon developed the "Sloom" series further by adding surfaces of high polish, powdercoat, inlay, or wood veneer. These ambiguous, pseudosexual forms are reminiscent of both industrial tools and domestic utensils, with some surfaces partially sandblasted to convey wear but also endurance, indicative of Veske-McMahon's overriding optimism.

The "Helve" (archaic term for "grip") series derives from tool handles found in a Tallinn hardware store, familiar but at the same time different from those sold in America. Haunted by them at Cranbrook, Veske-McMahon began to

Like Alice, Veske-McMahon realizes that mirrors do not reflect but rather reverse.

If a single theme keeps recurring in Veske-McMahon's practice, it is the longing for home and family, and the comfort, stability, and perceived permanence that they promise.

Borne III, 2014
repurposed plastic, aluminum
5 ⅞ x 2 ⅜ x ⅜"

Helve IV, 2012
ebony, sterling silver, powdercoating
3 ⅛ x 4 x 2 ⅜"

Helve IX, 2012
ebony, copper, powdercoating
14 ½ x 13 x 4 ⅜"

turn wood on a lathe, which resulted in organic, erotic shapes—some equivocal, others more explicit—a portent of the frank sexuality to be embraced by the "Glyph" and "Teem" series to come.

After completing his MFA, Veske-McMahon returned to Estonia for six months, three of them as artist-in-residence at the Estonian Academy of Arts in Tallinn. Feeling isolated because of the cold winter climate, long dark days, and difficulty with verbal communication, he again sought accessible, inexpensive materials with which to make "badges" that expressed his feeling of alienation. Remembering the ideas that ensued after spotting tools and implements at the Tallinn hardware store, he scoured an office supply center, finding boxes of untouched but nonetheless faded children's plastic paint trays, "saddened," as it were, by a weak manufacturing process and/or disuse. Though old and worn down, to Veske-McMahon they exuded an aura of hope. He laminated the trays with textured aluminum and cut them into everyday shapes to compose a lexicon of glyphs. Some of the characters are instantly recognizable, if abstract; for example, a baby's pacifier, dollar sign, ampersand, or mitten. Others are more oblique and vaguely phallic. He coupled some symbols, hanging each pair from a neck cord handwoven to recall friendship bracelets, and even fabricated two large, dense necklaces of interlocking elements that bring to mind Otto Künzli's *Big American Neckpiece.* Some glyphs, called *Borne* (bearer of a coded message), were fashioned as brooches to function as emotionally loaded insignias of affiliation or viewpoint that "simultaneously offer and withhold information," he says.

If a single theme keeps recurring in Veske-McMahon's practice, it is the longing for home and family, and the comfort, stability, and perceived permanence that they promise. In the "Sloom" series, some of the shapes were inspired by 1950s armoires and vanities, with colorations derived from the era's gentle pastel hues, adopted during a time when post-World War II hopefulness was at its peak. His work channels the redemptive spirit of Robert Gober's sculpture, which also employs markers of domesticity, such as sinks, chairs, and playpens, to probe sexuality and relationships.

Veske-McMahon lives in Brooklyn, New York, but is married to an Estonian man living in Vilnius, Lithuania. Since his marriage, he has developed a deep affection for Estonia, a Baltic country of pagan origin, spiritually rooted in nature, with a history of conquest by Viking, Danish, Swedish, and Teutonic invaders and, later, Soviet annexation. Estonia has been a democratic parliamentary

republic since 1991, but folk traditions have been proudly maintained to produce a strong material culture based upon the native vernacular. Veske-McMahon discovered examples of such imagery when he unearthed a layer of block-printed wallpaper beneath sheets of old newsprint and clumps of overgrown moss at his in-laws' house in Haapsalu. Similarly, in the archives of the Estonian National Museum in Tartu, he viewed distinctive village knitting patterns on display. Upon returning to New York, Veske-McMahon embarked upon a system to "blow up" renderings of the indigenous motifs he had documented by "wrapping them around" nylon 3D printed brooches through marbling and hydrographic transfer—the perfect techniques for objects that he views as thoughts "willed into being."

The "Teem" series, born of this 3D printing process, "indicates a theme of life-bearing, a want of lineage,"[6] Veske-McMahon says, concepts with which he wrestles. *Teem XI* conjoins childlike innocence with grownup sexuality, taking the form of an open-ended pretzel that terminates in a Mary Jane sandal on one "foot" and an exposed sock—or is it a condom?—on the other. A pattern, adapted from his grandmother's vintage Marimekko textiles, covers the surface of the brooch, contributing a sense of nostalgia as well as intergenerational bonding. He fashioned *Teem XII* as "knitted knitting needles," printed with an 1880 pattern adapted from a pair of Suure-Jaani mittens in the collection of the Estonian National Museum. The two "needles" comprising *Teem XII* are twisted and intertwined because they have no yarn, perhaps emblematic of the artist and his partner's childless union, while the homey surface pattern teems with both matrimonial bliss and an aesthetic enchantment with his husband's country of origin.

Despite its pathos, there is surreal humor to Veske-McMahon's purposefully bewildering iconography, which hands the viewer only enough information to stimulate "a new kind of itch."[7] The improbable combinations that comprise the "Glyph" and "Borne" series span toys to toilets: a broken comb sits atop a hot water bottle; a bone protrudes from a sandwich; a mustache intersects with a chicken drumstick; a ring encircles an undulating sausage (connoting the ever-present condom).

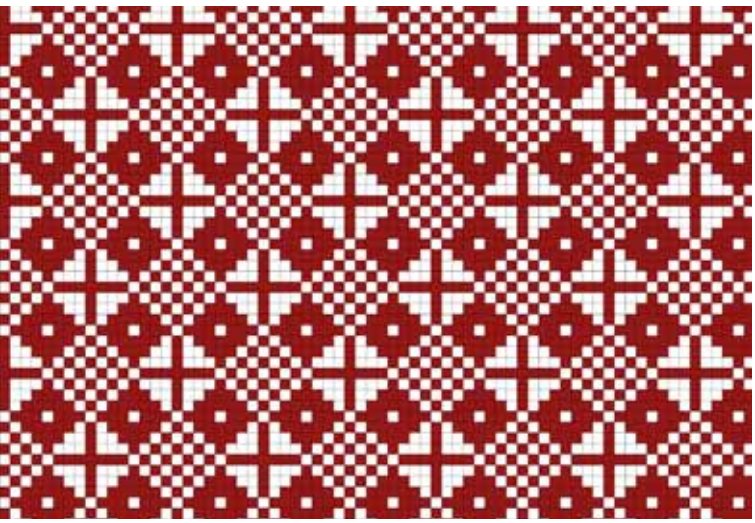
In her 1967 installation, *Three Spoons,* which, in actuality, involves *four* spoons, Yoko Ono played with the "gap between language and object,"[8] stating that the work hinges on "illusional beliefs, illusional situations, illusional relationships."[9] A supplemental object—the fourth spoon—completes an ill-defined set, standing in for the neglected, alienated, isolated, and ignored. Veske-McMahon charts a similar course, where words for things hold meaning apart from their materiality, possessing a related but independent function. They are "thoughts and feelings that have pristine clarity internally, but are awkward and unreliable once spoken,"[10] he says.

Timothy Veske-McMahon's jewelry combines intellect, emotion, signifiers, and things. It encourages

Borne X, 2015
repurposed plastic, aluminum
4 x 4 ¼ x ⅜"

Borne VI, 2015
repurposed plastic, aluminum
5 x 3 ⅜ x ⅜"

Despite its pathos, there is surreal humor to Veske-McMahon's purposefully bewildering iconography.



Estonian knitting pattern and knit sample from Suure-Jaani (used to hydrographically transfer onto *Teem XII,* 2015)

us to perceive the world in all its variety and nuance. He strives to make "loss-less" objects "that are confounded enough to avoid…sudden definition and compartmentalization by prior experience,"[11] he says, believing that it is only in a "choreographed middle space" between object and viewer that one can synthesize information and meaning. His oeuvre bravely inhabits that region, raising our awareness of life's many facets and fictions.

Toni Greenbaum is a Brooklyn-based art historian specializing in 20th- and 21st-century jewelry and metalwork.

---

1. *mirror milk: New Works by Timothy Veske-McMahon*, April 18–May 26, 2015, exhibition announcement, Brooklyn Metal Works.
2. Ibid, "From the artist."
3. Ibid.
4. The title is inspired by Alice's query to her pet kitten as to whether it thinks it would be given milk in the flipped world, and, if so, would it be good to drink?
5. *Op. cit. 2.*
6. Timothy Veske-McMahon, email to Toni Greenbaum, 21 June 2015.
7. Ibid.
8. Wall text accompanying installation of Yoko Ono, *Three Spoons*, in *Yoko Ono: One Woman Show, 1960-1971*, May 17–September 7, 2015, Museum of Modern Art, NYC.
9. Ibid.
10. *Op. cit. 6.*
11. Ibid.

Furthermore:
www.timothymcmahon.com

Out of the Darkness
The Visions of Kadri Mälk

BY URSULA ILSE-NEUMAN

Lupus in Fabula—Dark Silence
(brooch), 2014
jet, black rhodium plated white gold, moleskin, black diamonds, sapphire
2 ¾ x 1 ⅞ x ¾"

KADRI MÄLK'S JEWELRY intrigued me from the moment I learned of "Nocturnus," a three-day colloquium the artist organized in 2001 on the subject of how ideas emerge from the subconscious to take form in jewelry.[1] When I finally met Mälk last March in her native Estonia, and experienced her creations firsthand, the impact of their hushed silence and dark mystery was powerful and enduring.

Mälk's jewelry is highly personal. Each piece tells a guarded tale, yet also speaks openly of her love of Estonia. In Mälk's hands, precious metals and gemstones, as well as found objects and such uncommon jewelry materials as moleskin, leather, fur, fish scales, bone, horn, shark teeth, and beeswax come to reflect Estonia's northern light, resonate with its forests and coasts, and echo the nation's myths and legends and its tumultuous but proud history.

As Mälk explains, her intent is to capture "the metaphysical atmosphere you can feel when living here."[2] Her uncompromising emphasis on individual expression, while nevertheless addressing universal themes that touch upon our emotional, cultural, and intellectual connectedness, has made Mälk a leading figure in Estonian and Nordic jewelry and an important contributor to the global dialogue among art jewelers today.

Visiting Mälk in the medieval stone building in Tallinn's Old Town where she lives with her husband, Kafka scholar Mati Sirkel, vividly dramatizes the way in which reality and imagination intersect in the artist's life and work. It is here, in a home whose dark nooks and crannies hold centuries of secrets that can be felt but not seen, that Mälk contemplates the mysteries that lie at the heart of her jewelry.

Mälk places a high value on artistic freedom, and she is keenly aware that the right for Estonian artists to express themselves is intimately linked to the country's hard-won fight for independence. Strategically situated on the Baltic Sea between aggressive neighbors to the east and west, this small nation has been occupied and subjugated time and again over the course of centuries. Its struggles against oppression spawned a fierce sense of national unity and cultural pride that was brought to life through notable literary, theatrical, and musical creations in the 19th century, when nationalist movements swept across Europe. This spirit lives on and finds expression in Estonia's arts today.[3]

Although Estonia declared its independence in 1920, the country's geography kept it at the crossroads of opposing forces—Russia from the East and Germany from the West—during much of the 20th century. It was invaded by the Soviets in 1940 and by the Germans in 1941. Then, upon Germany's defeat in 1944, the Soviets annexed Estonia as a Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR), compelling tens of thousands of Estonians to flee their homeland, while others continued an underground insurgency against Soviet rule that lasted for 50 years.

The impact of Soviet rule on the arts in Estonia was nothing short of devastating, as restrictions were imposed in order to radically alter and even expunge its cultural

Sounds of Earth (necklace), 1990–92
silver, black precious coral, carved ebony, onyx, enamel cloisonné, almandine, ground stone, horsehair, smoky quartz
length 22 ½"
COLLECTION ESTONIAN MUSEUM OF APPLIED ART AND DESIGN
PHOTO: SULEV KEEDUS

In Whale's Stomach (earrings), 1988
wood, fine silver, enamel
2 ¾ x 1 ⅛ x ⅝"
COLLECTION ESTONIAN MUSEUM OF APPLIED ART AND DESIGN
PHOTO: TIIT RAMMUL

Don't Look Back II (Lot's Wife) (bracelet), 2000
silver, Cibatool, black coral, shark teeth, topaz, almandine, lepidolite, cordierite, hyacinth
2 x 7 ⅜ x 2 ¾"
COLLECTION ESTONIAN MUSEUM OF APPLIED ART AND DESIGN
PHOTO: TIIT RAMMUL

identity. As part of this effort, artists who remained during the occupation were forcibly cut off from the European cultural milieu in which the country's educated and creative community had participated for centuries. In the fine arts, formalist traditions were condemned in favor of socialist realism, and in the applied arts demonstrations of skilled workmanship were only tolerated within the framework of historicist clichés. As a result of this suppression of artistic individuality, the country's output in the visual arts became trite and unimaginative, and it wasn't until the late 1950s, when Stalinist control began to weaken, that this creative decline was reversed.[4]

Throughout their struggle to sustain a national cultural integrity, Estonian artists turned to nature and ancient customs and traditions for inspiration, and by the 1960s, this focus and the use of nontraditional materials led to more energetic and expressive jewelry forms. Ironically, although these new creations were informed by restored, albeit limited, exposure to international art movements, the jewelry they created had a decidedly Estonian character.

Yet another chink in Soviet armor emerged in the 1970s when artist-jeweler Rein Mets (1942–2011) rose to prominence by employing traditional jewelrymaking materials, principally silver with a masterful use of colorful semiprecious stones, to create jewelry that was no longer anonymous, but recognizable as a unique work of creativity.[5] Then, in the 1980s, as Estonia began its push to independence, Mets introduced a strong sense of nationalism into his jewelry by incorporating Estonian myths and legends, many of which conveyed symbolic concepts. Mälk credits Mets with influencing her and paving the way for the next generation of contemporary jewelers to rejoin the international dialogue.[6]

Each piece tells a guarded tale, yet also speaks openly of her love of Estonia.

Mälk was born in Tallinn in 1958, when Estonia was under Soviet rule. She began studying painting at Tallinn's Tartu Art School in 1977, but sought a more tactile medium and decided to enter the jewelry department at the Estonian Academy of Arts. There she came under the strong influence of Professor Leili Kuldkepp (1931–2008), who was head of the metalsmith department. After graduating, Mälk worked as a freelance artist, apprenticing in a stone-cutting factory in St. Petersburg, Russia, in 1985 and studying gemology at the Lahti Institute of Design in Finland in 1993–94, before completing her studies later in 1994 at Bernd Munsteiner's lapidary studio in Idar-Oberstein, Germany. It was between the years of 1987 to 1991, when Mälk was forging her way as an artist, that Estonia achieved formal independence from the Soviet

Resistance I Anna—Sacrificial Plate, 1997
polychromed wood, rubber, silver, carved slate, beeswax, iron, black coral, shark's tooth, cordierite
4 ⅛ x 5 ¾ x ¾"
COLLECTION ESTONIAN MUSEUM OF APPLIED ART AND DESIGN
PHOTO: SULEV KEEDUS

Union, although it was not until 1994 that the last units of the Russian army left the country.[7]

Mälk confirms the life-changing influence that Kuldkepp exerted on her thinking. Kuldkepp had grown up amid Estonia's forests and marshes, and this had fostered her nature-oriented world view, as well as a deep devotion to the country's traditions and an underlying mysticism, all of which she made abundantly manifest in her jewelry. She expressed her love of native rituals and mythology through indigenous materials, notably Estonian minerals that she cut and polished herself. Her brooch from her "Shapes of Souls" series features a mineral from Saaremaa Island, a site for a wealth of glacial conglomerates and fossils.

"I am first of all allegorical, a storyteller."

Kuldkepp saw a kindred spirit in Mälk, and when illness forced Kuldkepp's retirement in 1995, she asked her protégée to take over as head of the Academy's jewelry department. Mälk describes the logic behind Kuldkepp's choice: "I am first of all allegorical, a storyteller. Quiet narrative, intoned murmur, the partly darkly metaphysical manner of expression has been my leitmotif and is probably typical of the entire school founded by my teacher, Kuldkepp. The spiritual question tormenting me finds a solution via narrative."[8]

From the beginning, Mälk's jewelry distinguished itself from earlier Estonian jewelry, which had mainly featured traditional gold- and silversmithing, including delicate filigree pieces, by portraying a world alive and animated, but mysterious and magical. Mälk perceives night and blackness as an elixir from which she draws the inspiration that infuses her jewelry with darkness and a sense of hushed silence. She expresses these ideas through a purposeful choice of materials, including black stones, jet and black coral, the darkest of ebony, patinated silver, painted Cibatool®, and, on occasion, even recycled piano keys.

Mälk was the first Estonian jeweler to use nontraditional materials as central, rather than adjunct, elements in her compositions, with the latent emotion in the material and its tactility determining its suitability. These materials are often contrasted quite unexpectedly with a few colorful stones or small patches of exuberant enamel. This juxtaposition is apparent in an early work, *In Whale Stomack,* from 1988. The earrings of carved and colored wood, fine silver, and enamel were completed shortly after Mälk graduated from the Academy and before she took over as the head of the jewelry department. Although there is a clear narrative element underscored by the title, the contents of the whale's stomach are anything but well defined.

Mälk goes beyond the physical qualities of stones and metals to find their spiritual powers. She refers to jet, for example, as "stone that experienced life," whose dust is

Fresh, Dried, Only Young (brooch), 2001
dried mushroom sarcodon imbricatus, silver, almandines
1 ½ x 1 ⅜ x ⅜"
THE PEKKA ERELT COLLECTION, ESTONIA
PHOTO: TIIT RAMMUL

Fata Morgana (brooch), 2015
painted Cibatool, silver, gold, purple spinels
2 x 3 x ⅝"
THE COMINELLI FOUNDATION COLLECTION, ITALY
PHOTO: TIIT RAMMUL

precious; and she compares coral to human skin. As a rule, the connections and meanings in her association of forms and materials are not intelligible to the general public, nor are they intended to be. Mälk believes that the perception of spirituality in her jewelry reflects the spirituality of the viewer, and she consistently declines to interpret any of her pieces because that would diminish their mystery and distort viewers' perceptions of them. "After all," Mälk says, "it is essential to think and see for yourself without outside influences."[9]

For Mälk, making jewelry provides structure for her spiritual journey, and takes her beyond rational observation to a world inhabited by spirits and contending forces. Consequently, she designs her jewelry not only to be "read" as a narrative, but to protect the wearer like an amulet. In keeping with this goal, she uses stones, metals, and images that are drawn from a world when people still had close contact with nature.

Mälk's engagement with myths, ethnology, and archaeology continued in the 1990s. In her *Sounds of Earth* necklace from 1990–92, her combination of silver, black coral, carved ebony, onyx, enamel, almandine, stone, horsehair, and smoky quartz evokes a feeling of ancient rituals. The work offsets the organic and the inorganic, the natural and the manmade, featuring intricately carved ebony figures embellished with colorful enameling. Mälk's interest in having her jewelry relate to the body as armor and adorner can be seen in her large neckpieces, which follow the curves of the wearer's neck to extend down the back and chest. To Mälk, a piece of jewelry provides the body with what it lacks, or what needs strengthening, and the body and jewelry should coexist and interrelate from the moment a piece touches the skin. In the late 1990s, in addition to jewelry, Mälk produced a number of large plates with haunting images that express fear and the supernatural and appear to have sprung from what C.G. Jung would refer to as our universal unconscious. Seeing *Resistance I Anna—Sacrificial Plate* from 1997 is like discovering an ancient tribal relic that contains symbols that seem both familiar and remote. While each viewer will have his own interpretation of the central human-like figure with outstretched arms, all will recognize the sense of fear in its face and the suggestions of weaponry.

A good example of the artist's determination to remain silent about the interpretation of her imagery is the *Doesn't Look Back II* bracelet of 2000, one of a series centering on Lot's wife, who was turned to salt when she looked back at God's destruction of the sinful city of Sodom, as recounted in the book of Genesis. While the images in this series are not explicit, the title makes it tempting to relate the central rock crystal element to the pillar of salt that was all that remained of Lot's ill-fated wife. Often asked

Angel Desperado (brooch), 2002
ebony, silver, purple rhodolite, raw blue spinel
2 ½ x 1 ¾ x ⅜"
THE ROTASA COLLECTION
PHOTO: TIIT RAMMUL

Angel in Quandary (brooch), 2015
painted cibatool, silver, gold, raw black tourmaline, prasiolite
4 ½ x 1 ⅞ x ½"
PHOTO: TIIT RAMMUL

Manfred Brooch, 2015
silver, gold, paint, pearl, onyx, emerald, sapphires
4 ½ x 1 ¼ x ¼"
PHOTO: TIIT RAMMUL

about this particular vision, Mälk's response is, "I lack the habit and custom and will to interpret my works after their completion. A work either tells you something or it doesn't. Once you have completed it, then keep quiet. The work either radiates or not."[10]

Mälk often works in series, as in *Fresh, Dried, Only Young Brooch* from 2001, in which the rectangular form is a compositional device that began in the 1990s and can still be seen today in the *Fata Morgana—Intricacies* brooch from 2015. The *Fata Morgana* features an opaque black rectangle with subtle imprints, through which Mälk skillfully infuses the mysterious with a more contemporary sensibility by using dried mushroom combined with silver and polychrome wood.

"There is often no clear-cut line between reality and imagination."

Another recurring Mälk theme centers on angels, one of the first expressions of which is the *Angel Desperado* brooch completed in 2002. In this work, the diffuse outline of a figure appears in the silver, alongside a dark ebony plaque that is highlighted in the upper left by raw blue spinels and purple rhodolite in what appears to be a sacred embellishment. "This is an angel," Mälk divulges, "with many unanswered questions on its shoulders."[11] Indeed there is a resemblance between Mälk's series of angels and the figures in Kuldkepp's "Shape of Souls" series from 1990 and 1991. One of Mälk's latest works, finished in July 2015, is *Angel in Quandary,* contrasting the silver figure against a stark painted Cibatool® background with an offset raw black tourmaline that serves to separate the mysterious figure from the luminous clarity of the prasiolite. The *Manfred Brooch* from 2015, a memorial tribute to her friend and fellow jeweler Manfred Bischoff (1947–2015), continues her fascination with the shrouded, indistinct figure that symbolizes a supernatural force for good. As Mälk explains, "There is often no clear-cut line between reality and imagination. Sometimes the invisible might turn out to be more real than the visible."[12]

Kadri Mälk often returns to earlier themes and styles and is not seriously concerned with the dates of her works. Alongside the refinement and perhaps positive message in the *Angel in Quandary* and *Manfred Brooch* are recurrent dark, foreboding elements, as seen in *Lupus in Fabula—Dark Silence* from 2014. The title translates as "speak of the wolf and he will come," and the blackness of this primal symbol is indicated in jet, black rhodium-plated white gold, and moleskin, energized with small black diamonds and a solitary sapphire.

The rapid rise of Estonian art jewelry in the last two decades is largely attributable to Mälk, whose teaching methods at the Academy place a strong emphasis on personal expression, and whose faith in individual creativity

has encouraged the development of one of today's most original and stimulating jewelry movements.[13] Her students are diverse in approach and anything but imitative of their teacher, who has instructed them to think for themselves and to develop their own ideas. Current among the artists in this new generation are Mälk's students Piret Hirv, Eve Margus-Villems, Tanel Veenre, Kristiina Laurits, Villu Plink, and Katrin Sipelgas. Veenre may be the best known of Mälk's students, with works such as his *Preceding the Blossoming* brooch from 2011, noted for their originality and daring use of innovative materials and techniques. In essence, these artists represent not only themselves, but their teacher, their school, and their country. This new generation of Estonian jewelers has made Estonian jewelry significant in the contemporary jewelry scene.

Mälk's own jewelry reflects her belief that "life is actually a dark space. And the shadow is the queen of colors. And we are directed in this dark room by unconscious decisions, by stars, by friends, by lovers—and maybe also by jewelry."[14] To see Mälk's jewelry is to experience her reality. Out of the darkness of the artist's subconscious have come provocative visions that touch deep chords within those who are drawn to probe their mysteries.

Ursula Ilse-Neuman is Consulting Jewelry Curator at New York's Museum of Arts and Design, where she has worked as a curator for more than 20 years.

---

1. The event was held at night in Pädaste, a village on the Estonian island of Muhu, September 6-9, 2001.
2. Interview with Kadri Mälk, published online 03.01.2007: http://klimt02.net/forum/interviews/interview-to-kadri-malk-2006.
3. The Estonian composer Arvo Pärt is considered to be one of today's most important composers of classical music.
4. Lea Pruuli, "Estonian Jewellery," in *Estonian Jewellery 1960s–1990s* (Tallinn: The Art Museum of Estonia, 1997), 2.
5. Rein Mets's Estonian predecessors in the 1960s include avant-garde jewelry artists Jüri Arrak and Haivi Raadik. See Merike Alber's "Rein Mets," in the exhibition catalogue *Rein Mets* (Tallinn: Väjaandja, 2012), 11.
6. Notable Estonian jewelers of the late 1980s and '90s who looked to international art rather than Estonian traditions for their inspiration include Katrin Amos, Ulle Kouts, Ane Raunam, Mari Partelpoeg, Heldur Pruuli, Mari Kabin, and Jaan Parn.
7. The Estonian campaign for independence between 1987 and 1991 is known as The Singing Revolution because the Estonians used their annual singing festival, a long-held tradition that attracted thousands, as an opportunity to express their desire for national independence.
8. Interview with Kadri Mälk, http://klimt02.net/forum/interviews/interview-to-kadri-malk-2006.
9. Personal communication, Tallinn, March 2015.
10. Interview with Kadri Mälk, http://klimt02.net/forum/interviews/interview-to-kadri-malk-2006.
11. As quoted in Mirella Cisotto Nalon, "Between Shadows and Light," in the exhibition catalogue *Pensieri Preziosi 8: La Magica Poesia della Scuola orafa di Tallinn* (Padua, Italy: Comune di Padova, 2012), 20.
12. Kadri Mälk, preface to *Nocturnus: International Jewellery Art Exhibition and Nocturnal Colloquy* (Tallinn: Metal Art Department, Estonian Academy of Arts, 2002), 9.
13. An important turning point occurred in 1998 when Mälk received an invitation to exhibit in the Netherlands and made her participation contingent on taking a group of younger Estonian artists with her. Calling themselves *ohuLoss* (Castle in the Air), this group of jewelry artists was introduced to the public in 1999 at Galerie Marzee in Nijmegen.
14. Interview with Kadri Mälk, http://klimt02.net/forum/interviews/interview-to-kadri-malk-2006.

Angel (brooch), 2000
jet, sepia, black coral, white gold, silver, hyacinth
3 x 2 ¾ x ½"

TANEL VEENRE
Preceding the Blossoming (brooch) 2011
balsa wood, fishing floats, rock crystal, silver, cosmic dust
3 ⅞ x 2 ¾ x 2 ⅜"

The Function of Silver

Twist Coffee Pot, 2012
sterling silver, ebony
8 x 7 x 7"

Joost During

BY PATRICIA HARRIS AND DAVID LYON

Twist Tall Vase, ca. 2010
sterling silver
10 x 8 x 8"

Kate Spade Flatiron Flatware (Lenox), 2004
stainless steel

Salad Servers, 2005
sterling silver
12 x 4"

POET AND CRITIC Louis Zukofsky once explained poetry as "a function of language with a lower limit of speech and an upper limit of song." As in the calculus of any function, infinite variations occur along a continuum between those limits. The work of designer and silversmith Joost During can be described in similar fashion, as a function of metal with a lower limit of flatware and an upper limit of hollowware. His approach to design and his skills as a maker are the same, whether he is creating a flatware design for an industrial manufacturer of home goods or patiently hammering out a complex, twisted vessel as part of his personal studio work. In either case, the finished piece is destined for the table.

"I like making functional objects," During says. "I like the challenge of making something that gives pleasure as you use it." Trained in his native Netherlands, During came to Rhode Island shortly after earning his technical school diplomas in 1996. Although he had made only one spoon during his entire education, he applied at the Gorham Manufacturing Company for a job making flatware samples of new designs. At that point, Gorham was a leader in producing American tableware.

During had apprenticed with a jeweler, but notes that the experience had prepared him to face almost any technical challenge. After a four-week acclimatization and a subsequent test making samples from two flatware designs, During was brought into Gorham's design department in Smithfield, Rhode Island. During also set up his private Yoast Design studio ("Joost" rhymes with "toast") within a year of moving to the U.S.

Nearly two decades later, Gorham's Smithfield facility has closed, and it is During who has in some ways taken in Gorham rather than the other way around. The silversmith and his wife, jeweler Dianne Reilly, have their studios in a voluminous 19th-century brick former Episcopal church they bought in New Bedford, Massachusetts, near the Rhode Island border. When Gorham closed its plant, the couple took stewardship of more than a century's accumulation of molds, dies, and technical drawings. They also carted off five tons of bronze models of nearly everything Gorham ever cast in silver. "If we didn't take it in, they were going to melt it down," During says. "We're trying to find a museum that's willing to take it."

Although much of the material is in storage, many of the molds and odd bits of Gorham ornament can be found throughout the couple's vast studio. The old church's leaded glass stained windows combine with the collections to create the air of an ad hoc museum of tableware artisanry.

Reactic Flatware (Dansk), 2001
stainless steel

Wishbone Flatware (Nambe), 2004
stainless steel

Given a studio setting that would have turned William Morris an envious verdigris, it is all the more surprising that During's designs are a far cry from the highly ornamented silver for which Gorham was known in its heyday. The lean lines of his aesthetic reflect the Dutch and Scandinavian 20th-century readings of design so powerfully influenced by the Bauhaus.

A great believer that form follows function, During puts a lot of thought—and trial and error—into everyday utensils that most of us take for granted. "Of all the things we use," he explains, "we hold flatware the most. So a big question has to be how it feels when you hold it in your hand. It needs to be comfortable; it needs to be pleasant."

It is also a challenge to create fresh designs within the narrow parameters that define a knife, a fork, and a spoon. "There are a lot of small subtleties," During maintains. He points to a tabletop laid out with forks from different flatware sets he has created under the Gorham, Lenox, Dansk, Nambé, and Kate Spade labels. Slight variations in gauge, a diagonally truncated handle here, a different taper of the tines there, an incised line within line—each change is a stamp of character that sets a design apart.

"I like the challenge of making something that gives pleasure as you use it."

The fork, he explains, is the key item in a flatware pattern. After making a sketch, During generally begins his sample set by creating the fork by hand. "If you look at most of the forks, the tines lift off the table at pretty much the same angle," he points out. "It has to be comfortable to bring to your mouth. If they curve up too sharply, it feels like you're going to poke yourself in the nose. If the tines lie down too flat, it's equally uncomfortable."

The spoon, During notes, is really the fork with a shallow bowl instead of tines and a handle that has been slightly scaled down. The issues of angle and balance are the same. "You want to be able to hold it comfortably in your hand and have the bowl stay flat," he says. "If it stands up more, you have to bring it to your mouth differently, which is really uncomfortable."

The knife is the oddity in the set because its function has to complement rather than match the other pieces. "The trick with the knife is to make it look like it belongs with the pattern," During says. "I start with the fork handle outline and usually scale it up. The handle is slightly bigger because it also has to be thicker. It's a matter of trying to work out the proportions."

Jester Teapot, 1997
sterling silver, rose wood
10 x 11 x 10"

When During worked in Gorham's design department, he almost always made prototype samples by hammering sterling silver, whether the flatware was to be reproduced as sterling or stainless steel. ("They had an awful lot of silver lying around," he observes drolly.) In his own studio, During usually makes prototypes in brass. As he interprets a general design sent to him by the company, he creates an outline on the computer, rolls brass bar stock close to the desired thickness, transfers the pattern, and cuts out a cutlery blank with a bandsaw. The process of finishing the model typically involves more filing than hammering.

But During still turns to silver to develop his own flatware designs that he submits to the commercial houses. He likes to see where the metal will lead him. His designs selected for production by Nambé and Dansk (now both subsidiaries of Lenox) are acknowledged with his tiny initials embossed on each piece. (During's "Wishbone" tableware for Nambé was featured in *Metalsmith*'s 2005 "Exhibition in Print.") Other work remains more anonymous.

As During notes, his designs are "very Northern European–looking. That's my strength, I think." But he doesn't push the edges of contemporary design, nor are his creations notably minimalist. As he has studied the ornament in old Gorham silver, he has developed a fresh appreciation for embellishment. "The more I work with some ornament, the more I understand that even the ornament itself is all about shape," he says. "Once you start diving into the ornament, it's actually just as important. Good ornament is actually beautifully proportioned and beautifully shaped."

During rarely goes so far as to add embellished shapes to his flatware, as ornament would interrupt the smooth linear flow so characteristic of his designs. "But I have been experimenting and playing more with textures and things," he admits. The handles of one of his best-selling patterns, Gorham's "Biscayne," are embossed with stamped texture. Some of his newer designs, including those that he's still developing, also include stamped texture or hammer marks on the handles. In effect, the textural elements provide a counterpoint to the fluidity. These experiments remain works in progress, a flatware outgrowth of his more meditative approach to hollowware designs.

During leads a dual life as a silversmith. Although he's most widely known for his numerous and popular flatware designs, his studio work focuses on hollowware, where the intense practicalities of eating utensils take a back seat to beauty for its own sake. That doesn't mean they are impractical. "I love working within function," During says. "It also limits me. I would get lost if I were making something purely sculptural. Making a sculpture that is also functional helps me stay grounded."

During's early hollowware pieces, such as the *Jester Teapot* from 1997, demonstrate a penchant for pushing the silver to its limits with extravagant, even extreme arcs. It is as if he is drawing in three dimensions by hammering the metal as far as it will go. Perhaps ironically, he prefers to work in recalcitrant sterling rather than in more malleable fine silver, and he prefers either kind of silver to working in gold.

"I like the resistance of it," says During. "You have to fight sterling silver a bit more, and there's always the danger that if you push it too far, it will crack," he says. At the same time, he has learned to pay attention to the dictates of the material. "It's a romantic notion that the metal tells you what to do, but if you fight it too hard, the finished piece has an unresolved tension. I've learned to find out how the metal wants to move. How does it want to form itself?"

"Good ornament is actually beautifully proportioned and beautifully shaped."

A 2003 workshop with Danish metalsmith Allan Scharff at Haystack Mountain School of Crafts in Deer Isle, Maine, radically

Twist Box, date
sterling silver
5 x 5 x 3"

Twist Sugar and Creamer, 2007
sterling silver
2 ½ x 2 ¾ x 2 ¾"

Twist Small Bowl, ca. 2010
sterling silver
2 ½ x 6 x 6"

Twist Teapot, ca. 2010
sterling silver, ebony
5 x 6 ½"

Twist Pitcher and Cups, ca. 2010
sterling silver
pitcher 10 x 2 ½ x 2 ½"
cups 3 x 1 ¾ x 1 ¾"

Rocking Bud Vase, 2009
sterling silver
5 x 2 ¾"

altered the way During approaches hollowware. Although Scharff is best known as a jewelry designer for Georg Jensen, at that time he was investigating vessels with diagonal walls and highly textured surfaces. During took the approach to both form and finish to heart, making a number of trial pieces at the workshop that served as sketches in metal when he returned to the vessel form a few years later. Although he was inspired by Scharff's explorations, During ultimately developed his own technique for shaping the vessels and his own approach to space and volume.

One of the earliest pieces in what During has come to call the "Twist" series was the *Twist Box,* a small box with a fitted lid that looks like a Cubist deconstruction of volume. While it might appear to be composed of pieces soldered together, this early example, like all that followed, is actually hammered from a single piece of sterling. Although During loves working with old tools he has salvaged from industrial silver shops, he finds that he increasingly has to make his own equipment. As the "Twist" pieces have become more complex, he needs specialty hammers to reach through narrow passages and shape the curves and angles.

The more explicitly linear "Twist" motifs that continue to dominate During's work began to emerge around 2007 with the *Twist Sugar and Creamer* set. Both pieces are built on a square base and feature four more or less straight sides at the top that are canted 45 degrees from the base. The twist introduces the tension of discord into the simple and elegant forms. The viewer's perception switches back and forth between the expectation of shape posed by the base, and the realignment of shape defined by the lip. It is as if During has channeled the topological concerns of his fellow Dutchman, M.C. Escher, in silver. "I like pieces that don't look the same from every side," During says.

Around 2009 or 2010, During began to compound the twists from a regular square base. Pieces like *Twist Small Bowl* and *Twist Large Square Bowl* are raised from square bases, but each side twins as it rises, leaving just the suggestion of a triangle in each "petal" that spreads from the base. This duplexing is a form often seen in nature, and hints at During's unabashed admiration of Art Nouveau. But unlike the practitioners of that movement, he emulates the form rather than explicitly copying the flora.

During also discovered that the forms changed dramatically when inverted. The *Twist Teapot* (ca. 2010) is almost the same shape as the *Twist Small Bowl* of the same period—except that During has upended it, cut off the bottom, soldered in a base, and fit a lid and handle to it. In similar fashion, the *Twist Tall Vase* (ca. 2010) serves as

Rivet Bowl, date TK
sterling silver, natural patina
copper
1 ½ x 10"

a template for the 2012 *Twist Coffee Pot*. During likes the combination of silver with dark wood, so he uses fluted, almost whimsical pieces of dark brown ebony (also salvaged from Gorham) as the pouring and lid handles of both the coffee and tea pots.

The lids and lips of During's pots are carefully built to pour driplessly while the lid remains in place without being held. It is an attention to detail characteristic of During, who professes annoyance at table pieces that do not serve their purpose perfectly. Even in experimental work, he does not lose sight of function.

"It's partially my training and partially who I am," During says with a shrug. "I like things kind of perfect." Yet he has come to grips with his own fallibility, sometimes even welcoming imperfections. "In a way these pieces are what they are because they're not perfect," he says, as he points out a fold in the wall of a vessel that is ever so slightly out of sync with other corners in the piece. "They also can't be too far away from perfect because then they don't work anymore. It's a balancing act. Everybody has to fight that—to find their own balance in what you let go and what you don't let go."

"I like pieces that don't look the same from every side," During says.

Although During was trained to work silver with a very high polish, he finds himself moving away from that kind of finish. "If you touch it, you scratch it," he says. "I prefer a finish that is not so bright because it brings out the color of the metal better."

During says he's not yet done with the "Twist" series. "'Twist' will have a place in my work for quite a while," he says. "There are so many variations."

During also simply likes the engagement with the metal. "I really enjoy the process of making. For some people, the process is a way to reach a goal. But I love the hammering and getting into a zone with it. When you have a day when it really works, it becomes kind of meditative. Your whole focus is on a very small area where you're hammering and everything else sort of fades away."

It is the function of silver.

Critics Patricia Harris and David Lyon live in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Furthermore: www.yoastsilver.com

Gift/Poison (ring), 2011
glass
2 ¾ x 2"
PHOTO COURTESY
GALLERY S O, LONDON

Bernhard Schobinger

Meaning in Every Material

BY LIESBETH DEN BESTEN

Bloody Scissors (necklace), 2014
steel, copper, Japanese
lacquer with cinnabar
PHOTO COURTESY
GALLERY S O, LONDON

Saw Cross (necklace), 1988
broken steel saw, silver, diamonds, silk cord
ANNELIES ŠTRBA COLLECTION, SWITZERLAND

Coat-Hanger Ring, 1966
white gold, grossular garnet

ONE COULD EASILY mistake Swiss jeweler Bernhard Schobinger for an iconoclastic goldsmith who struggles against jewelry and its traditions. His work violates aesthetic norms and rules, and many of his unsettling achievements during the past 45 years confirm this provocative viewpoint. Schobinger knows there are no permanent values; there is no stability; everything changes; and man is a mayfly. So why not orient himself against the passing delusions of the day? Yet there is more to his work than mere opposition.

Concluding that Schobinger is trying to breach boundaries by countering jewelry conventions is too simple a view. One could, of course, place him in the tradition of Dada, the sardonic cultural movement that also originated in Zürich. There are similarities: in his use of readymades, in his irrational way of working, in his absurd and disrespectful attitude towards the establishment. But Schobinger's absurdism does not turn into nonsense, and he does not dismiss aesthetics. Dada—although shortly revived in Fluxus—was history by the time Schobinger appeared on the scene. There is indeed some Fluxus influence in his early work; for instance, when he formulated certain immaterial ideas: *Concept I: Girdling a Finger,* and *Concept II: Diamond Under the Skin* (both 1973), which are both propositions to create jewelry in, and around, the body.[1]

Ideas have nourished Schobinger's jewelry throughout his career: *Coat-Hanger Ring* (1966); *Saw Cross* pendant, made from a broken steel saw and set with rose-cut diamonds (1988); and *Bottlenecklace,* crafted of broken bottlenecks (1988). More recently, he made *Kobe 17.01.1995* (2014) from shards of safety glass found in Kobe, Japan, after the earthquake. He says: "Ideas come out of emptiness. In German this is called *Einfall*. It means an idea just literally falls in a person. However, the transformation in a material body means work and there is energy involved. I have this need to realize things that were not there before in the world. But many times, when working, I start doubting if it makes sense, if it is necessary. Sometimes I have to put the piece aside and start something new. Then it is enough to have had the idea. My workshop is filled with unfinished objects made over the years."

Born in Zurich in 1946, Schobinger is the master of combining low and high culture, debris and precious materials; although the mere assembling and sampling is not what interests him. Behind his work is a transcendental drive, and through working metals and other materials intensively he is able to unveil their inherent energy. In Schobinger's view, everything is interconnected, there is no high or low. There are universal laws that connect man with nature, the cosmos, past, and future. Every material has its own story and karma.

Schobinger also makes sculpture, but jewelry is his destiny, his most poignant means of expression. During the late 1970s a collaboration with his wife, artist Annelies Štrba, helped to solidify the practice of presenting jewelry on the body through the use of powerful photographs.

ANNELIES STRBA
Sonja with *Bottlenecklace*, 1988
photograph on canvas
COLLECTION DANNER STIFTUNG, NEUE SAMMLUNG / PINAKOTHEK DER MODERNE MUNCHEN

Bottlenecklace, 1988
glass, red cord
COLLECTION DANNER STIFTUNG, NEUE SAMMLUNG / PINAKOTHEK DER MODERNE MUNCHEN

Schobinger compiled these early photographs of his jewelry on Annelies and two friends from the New Wave scene from 1977-80 into his publication *Eiszeit-Juwelentraum(a)* (1981), later described by him as "an incunabulum of Punkaesthetic." Says Schobinger, "I made the black-and-white photographs for the book with my Hasselblad 500c; Annelies reproduced them in her photo studio."[2] The rawness of this body of work, which incorporates rust, debris, shards, fragments, nails, staples, and other sharp and aggressive shapes combined with silver, gold, and platinum, reflects a radical new way of thinking.

In 1987 Annelies took a series of photographs of their daughter Sonja wearing Schobinger's jewelry, and did the same a few years later, with their younger daughter Linda as subject. In a hazy, intimate, and languid atmosphere, these young women wear his jewelry with dignity. Says Schobinger: "There were cameras all around the house, so it felt completely normal to my children. I used 62 pictures to make a book *Devon-Karbon-Perm* (1988), self-published in an edition of 500, which was a milestone for both of us." Although the portraits were created by Annelies, they cannot be separated from Schobinger's work. They underscore his striving for honesty and authenticity.[3]

As a young boy Bernhard Schobinger already dreamed of becoming a goldsmith. In churches and chapels he discovered the beauty and mystery of religious objects. "These sacrosanct things possessed a higher density and gravity than anything else; they captivated me totally," says

"I have this need to realize things that were not there before in the world."

Kobe 17-01-1995 (necklace), 2014
shards of safety glass and porcelain found in Kobe, iron, gold

Multi-Ring, 1970
acrylic glass, white gold

Can-Opener Bracelet, 1977
gold, can opener
THOMAS BECHTLER COLLECTION, SWITZERLAND

Schobinger. "Their effect was magical."[4] In 1958, at the age of 12, he wrote in a school essay that he wanted to become a goldsmith. However, the path to goldsmithing was paved with obstacles. In the first place, his father had different plans for his son, and sent him to an "authoritarian and elitist" boarding school (where Schobinger developed his "anti-authoritarian reflex," as he calls it). He was also not admitted to the Jewelry and Hollowware Department (Schmuck und Gerät) at the Applied Arts School (Kunstgewerbeschule) in Zurich after having passed the so-called Johannes Itten Vorkurs (first, general foundation year). Seventeen years old, and passionately wanting to become a goldsmith, he had been turned away by the school he had just begun to appreciate. Out of sheer necessity, Schobinger became an apprentice in a commercial jewelry factory, where 19th-century master-pupil relations ("with punishments, a real purgatory") were still practiced. In 1968 he opened his own jewelry studio with gallery for contemporary art in Richterswil, near Zurich. It felt like liberation.

Concrete or Constructivist art, such as the work of Max Bill and Richard Paul Lohse, inspired Schobinger's first jewelry. He was eager to learn more about art, read books, and visit exhibitions and artist's studios. The ideals of abstract geometric art clearly resonated in his craving for the absolute and infinite. Later Schobinger wrote about his first confrontation with Bill's sculptures: "I was overwhelmed by *Unendliche Flächen* (Infinite Surfaces), with their gilt finishes burnished to a high gloss, which, for all their logical conception, were surrounded by a magical and wonderful aura."[5] In these sculptures he recognized the sacrosanct feeling from the churches in his childhood. It led him to realize that he could apply the principles of Concrete art to jewelry. In 1967 and 1968 he made a series of variations on endless loops, as bracelets and rings, all executed in yellow gold. Bill, Lohse, and other Concrete artists became highly interested in this jewelry.

Although his Concrete jewelry, especially if reproduced in black-and-white images, might look rather austere and generic, it speaks a completely different language than similar abstract-geometric jewelry designs from artists in other countries in the same period. Schobinger appreciated these endless shapes for their eternal connotations, and gold was the only appropriate material, in his view.

"Then came the change of paradigm through Punk and New Wave, and the transformation of the new music in consistent objects."

The three-part *Multi-Ring* (1970), available in seven different colors and made from acrylic and white gold,

is one of the few multiples Schobinger has made. But design and reproduction were not his goal, even though the ring's title hints at a production line. The *Element Fan* ring (1976), which has the same elementary shape as the *Multi-Ring* (a circle morphed into a square), shows that his interest was more fundamentally directed towards universal physical laws. Schobinger made different versions, in 1971, 1976, and 2003. The versions of the ring consist of five, seven, and eight parts, respectively, of metals varying from platinum, gold, tantalum, silver, copper, aluminum, titanium, steel, and zinc, each inscribed with their chemical symbol. The parts, representing the different hierarchies in metals, are telescoped into each other to form one perfect ring.

Schobinger's jewelry from the 1960s and '70s was appreciated and acquired by fine artists, but in the end, Concrete art didn't satisfy him. "The evolution of constructivist art, with its determinism, had come to an end," says Schobinger. "Then came the change of paradigm through Punk and New Wave, and the transformation of the new music in consistent objects." Over the course of the 1970s he started creating reproductions of everyday objects, such as the *Can Opener* bracelet, made in gold (1977). He also started to incorporate fragments of common objects, allowing room for humor and irony. The *Shampoo* necklace ("Agent Orange"), with five small PVC sachets filled with shampoo stringed to a silver thread (1981), is a fine example of his new way of working. Throughout the 1980s, Schobinger continued to produce works that pair danger and brutality with straightforward

Element Fan Ring, 2003
8 parts, platinum, gold, tantalum, silver, copper, titanium, steel, zinc
COLLECTION NEUE SAMMLUNG, PINAKOTHEK DER MODERNE, MUNICH

Holiday in Cambodia (bracelet), 1990
hammered silver
SONJA & CHRISTIAN GRABER COLLECTION, SWITZERLAND

Garden of Paradise (bracelet), 1990
hammered gold
PRIVATE COLLECTION, SWITZERLAND

Blitzableiterkette (Lightning Rod Necklace), 1990
copper (lightning rods), fire gilding, patina, rose quartz, gold, stainless steel
PHOTO: GALLERY S O LONDON

presentation. The necklaces of this period feature repeated elements, either old found objects (combs, saw blades, erasers) or rough pieces of mineral and metal, arranged in symmetrical compositions.

In 1990 Schobinger created some iconic pieces of jewelry, which are a summation of his art. *Holiday in Cambodia* and *Garden of Paradise* from 1990 are complementary bracelets: hammered skulls and bones in *Holiday in Cambodia* form a broad band of whitish silver that is reminiscent of bone, and the flowers, sun, and light rays hammered in a broad gold band of *Garden of Paradise* express an equal amount of horror and joy. Made only 11 years after the ending of the bloody Khmer Rouge regime, these pieces have a strong emotional charge.

Also in the 1990s Schobinger's interest in the metaphysical made him receptive to other materials. The history, energy, and properties of matter became the subject of his work: old bones excavated from his garden, meteorites, lightning conductors, prehistoric ceramic beads from the Ban Chiang culture in Thailand, poison bottles. Schobinger has the ability to see the cosmos in an old abandoned drain with its nickel layer eroded by many years of water dripping from the tap. The scuffs remind one of the sun and the moon, and the additional diamond is a star (*Himmelsring/Heavensring*, 1995). Found materials transform into symbols of the phenomenal, thus connecting daily life to eternity.

Werfox or Werwolf (bracelet), 1989
fine gold
RENÉE ZIEGLER COLLECTION, ZÜRICH, SWITZERLAND

For more than four decades, jewelry has tempted Schobinger because of its unavoidable associations with prestige, display of richness, and its hedonism and pleasure. His bracelet *The Werfox or Werwolf* (1989), made from a broad sheet of gold, has a raw image beaten into it with an ax. He wanted to punish this beautiful, glowing material, but through his intervention it remained lovely after all.

Schobinger does not accept the old distinctions between fine and applied arts, the same way that attempts to bring jewelry to a "higher" level by calling it "art jewelry" fail as well. "I have always called myself a goldsmith, because I have learned the craft, with the emphasis on *smith*," he says. He became interested in Japanese art and culture in the 1970s,

The history, energy, and properties of matter became the subject of his work.

and prefers to see himself a goldsmith in the Japanese tradition, in which there are no such distinctions made. In Japan, "all arts are seen as applied and autonomous at the same time," he says. "The way, *do,* is the goal."

In Japan, "all arts are known as *do*, says Schobinger. "*Shodo*, the way of calligraphy; *kendo*, the way of the sword. Consequently, all arts are applied and autonomous at the same time. The way, *do*, is the goal."

This view doesn't keep Schobinger from experimenting with metals. He has developed into a metallurgist, starting with casts from nature, such as *Grass Ring* and *Lime Flower Ring* (1977), each made with a centrifugal casting machine, similar to those used in dental offices. In 1978 he experimented casting with cobalt, magnetic metals, and metals with different melting points, centrifuged in the same mold. Beginning in 2009 he made wrought and forged meteorite and bog ore jewelry, while "metallurgical adventures" with 15th- and 18th-century cannonballs provided insights in the nature of the iron used for this antique ammunition.[6] While often working and living in Japan, and practicing martial arts, he also learned to work with *tamahagane*, a high-quality steel used for making knifes and swords. "I got an amount of *tamahagane* from Master Akira Kihara sensei, only for forging rings," he explains. (The Master is a swordsmith who has achieved "living national treasure" status.)

Although Bernhard Schobinger likes to see his jewelry exhibited in a showcase, much like prehistoric or other artifacts, he also agrees that the wearer plays a part. Says Schobinger, "I'm working for an imaginary wearer, one that doesn't exist. The objects have autonomy, whether they are worn or not. But I have forged iron rings from meteorites, ore iron, etc., which will only reveal certain structures when worn for a longer time. Because of wearing, material and form get lost, but on the other hand duration and energy are accumulated." Schobinger's awareness of his place in the universe gives his jewelry a poignant exigency rarely encountered in this world.

Liesbeth den Besten is an Amsterdam-based art historian, writer, curator and teacher.

All quotes, except where indicated otherwise, are taken from an email interview with Bernhard Schobinger, in April/May 2015.

1. See Florian Hufnagl, ed., *Bernhard Schobinger, The Rings of Saturn* (Stuttgart: Arnoldsche, 2015), p. 33.
2. The same year Swiss television made a short film under the same title that expresses the atmosphere of the time very well. See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eUyslFXYAA4
3. The exhibition *Bernhard Schobinger: The Rings of Saturn* at the Stedelijk Museum 's-Hertogenbosch, Netherlands, earlier this year, showed 9 huge photographs from this series, specially reprinted for the show.
4. Bernhard Schobinger, introduction in exhibition catalogue, *Annelies Štrba, Bernhard Schobinger,* Villa Seerose, Horgen-See, 2006 (unpaginated).
5. Florian Hufnagl, ed., *Bernhard Schobinger Jewels Now!*, (Stuttgart: Arnoldsche, 2003), p. 16.
6. *Bernhard Schobinger, The Rings of Saturn*, pp. 230-33.

Grass Ring, 1977
18k gold

Tamahagane Ring II, 2008
tamahagane steel, diamond
PHOTO: GALLERY S O LONDON

Bog Iron Ring, 2010
forged bog iron,
antique punch patterns

Reviews

The Enchanting Jewels of Elizabeth Gage

New Britain Museum
of American Art,
New Britain, Connecticut
April 25–July 26, 2015

by Patricia Harris and David Lyon

This first solo jewelry exhibition at the New Britain Museum of American Art focuses on a jeweler better known in fashion than in art circles. But there's no denying the artistry of Elizabeth Gage, and this retrospective is a generous look at her five-decade meditation on the concept of the jewel.

In Gage's vernacular, a "jewel" is either the central precious object or the entire piece of jewelry—as in "crown jewels." She deliberately alludes to royal treasure, and her pieces represent courtly adornment: gem-encrusted bands of gold for the arm or finger, formal clusters of gems placed on the ear, or stately necklaces that present a singular image in the hollow of the neck.

With a British fatherand American mother, Gage has always had a foot on either side of the Atlantic, but her artistic sensibility is profoundly English. She studied first at the Chelsea Art School and then at Sir John Cass College (now part of London Metropolitan College), where she enrolled in 1964. Some of her fondest childhood memories are of studying the diamonds in the British Museum.

In an era where the echoes of modernism have often dominated art jewelry, Gage's work seems curiously old-fashioned. But much as she mines historic inspirations—and even techniques, including granulation—these jewels are frankly postmodern. The allusions to antiquity bring a layer of complexity to the beauty of the jewel itself.

Gage nods to classical forebears with works that incorporate ancient coins in elaborate modern gold settings. Such coins were struck with the portraits of emperors and conquerors, befitting her fascination with royalty. There is a nobility to the composite work, as if she were knighting the "gem," or in this case, coin. The ceremonial formality of such pieces is unmistakable.

But Gage has the greatest rapport with designs inspired by medieval Europe. One of her recurring forms is the *Charlemagne Ring,* with a large central sapphire circled by other smaller gems and gold granulation. A reference to the sapphire covering a piece of the True Cross supposedly buried with Charlemagne, the rings gain aesthetic authority by contrasting sheer opulence with the clarity of the central gems.

Gage's medievalism continues in her "Templar" series of rings, named for the Knights Templar crusaders, mystics, and bankers. These rings explore the motif of an architectural band with a frieze of raised settings for precious stones. The parallel "Agincourt" series of rings (a reference to Prince Hal's victory in the Hundred Years' War) is meant to evoke medieval tapestries. The solid gold drum rings are cut into interlocking sections and set with gems, evoking medieval weaving in the patterning of the metal.

Charlemagne Ring, 2014
18k yellow gold, sapphire, red spinels, diamonds

Gage herself chose the pieces for the exhibition and designed it, so the retrospective clearly presents her own view of her career. At its best, it demonstrates the evolution of many series. The "Kiss" form begins, for example, as a fairly simple earring of a central jewel with four "wings" formed by pearls. It was inspired, Gage notes, by the elongated necks of African tribal women. As the form evolves, it becomes more effusive, finally reaching full expression in the Amethyst Kiss Pin, with a central stone, four stone "wings," and four more arms tipped with pearls. The intricate formal brooch maintains the elongated curves of its source of inspiration, but appears thoroughly European.

The flip side of Gage's medieval formalism is a fondness for African and Chinese carved stone figures that realistically depict everything from parrots and starfish to the head of a lion. She treats the figures as precious jewels that she sets in 18 or 22 karat gold. In the absence of irony, these works seem curiously out of place in a body of work that is otherwise the very definition of pomp.

Patricia Harris and David Lyon are writers and critics based in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Amethyst Kiss Pin, 1996
18k yellow gold, amethyst, green enamel, cultured pearls
2 ⅜ x 2 ⅛"

Melanie Isverding: In Other Smiles

Gallery Loupe and
The Gallery at Reinsteinl/Ross,
New York City
April 23–May 10, 2015

by Rosanne Raab

In her recent exhibition, "In Other Smiles," German jeweler Melanie Isverding presented a collection of brooches and necklaces called "Cavea." The gallery installation displayed the work out-of-the box, making it more accessible for the inquisitive viewer.

Isverding began her metalsmithing career employed at a production jewelry firm in Vreden, Germany. She refined her technical skills as an apprentice in Hanau; and continued her jewelry master studies at the Academy of Fine Arts, Munich, in the metals department chaired by Otto Kunzli. Currently, Isverding maintains an independent studio in Munich and participates as a part-time assistant to jeweler Daniel Kruger at the Burg Giebichenstein in Halle.

The Latin term *Cavea* is defined as cages or hollow spaces. Isverding develops ideas for her work by forming three-dimensional models with paper and scissors. Computer-generated drawings further expand her design, with detailed markings that account for the many pieces needed for each assemblage. She laser-cuts sheets for each component, and finishes each element by hand, and in the final stage, inserts pulverized stones, minerals, and pearls in geometric forms—polyhedrons, cylinders, or even simple cuboids. "Cavea" brooches and necklaces, each identified by a consecutive number, demonstrate a high level of perfection on all surfaces, connections, and joints.

Cavea (43), 2015
silver, enamel, chrushed garnet, glimmer, lacquer
4 ⅜ x 3 ⅜ x 1"

"Other Smiles" subtly asks, "What is the real substance of the piece?" Isverding intends that her jewelry be elusive, objects filled with memory and longing that create a whisper of luxury. Crushed hematite, peridots, azurite, and pearls, protected in their cages, may lose their original recognizable forms and their marketplace worth, but they retain a color and sparkle that arouse an awareness of their original gem state.

Isverding likes to design brooches because "…they are similar to objects or stand-alone pieces." She enjoys seeing them on the body, but also appreciates when the pieces are strong enough to stand on their own.

Cavea (8), 2011
steel, silver, enamel,
crushed garnet, lacquer
9 x 7 ⅞ x ⅛"

"Cavea" brooches, precision-cut triangles, rectangles, and circles, support kinetic elements attached by rings or ribbons. *Cavea (43),* a half-moon, suggests a badge of honor adorned with citations that contains crushed garnets resting within the hollow of the perforated enclosure. *Cavea (40),* a gray lacquered brooch with protruding clipped wings, encloses closely guarded hematite and pearls pulverized into granular particles.

"Cavea" chain-link necklaces evoke medieval chatelaines. Isverding looks back to the German tradition of Schutzerfest, an annual ritual in which a king and queen parade through the community, with the king wearing a prized chain that receives an additional charm or badge each year. She expresses great passion for these necklaces because they are full of stories, names, and history. The inspirational spirit of her work echoes these cherished connections.

The artist speaks about childhood memories—fences, windows, and different kinds of nets. *Cavea (08)* is a necklace composed of seven rectangular "windows," symmetrically positioned on a circle-linked silver chain, that branch out from the center in a graduated formation. A warm mahogany-red lacquer enhances the spectacle of the crushed garnets secreted within. Necklace *Cavea (38)* bundles 12 "nets" on a full-length chain that enclose a treasury of crushed pyrite and smoky quartz. Each necklace is mysterious.

Isverding's collection is rooted in traditional metalsmithing techniques, but transcends its decorative surface to illuminate what might have been overlooked at first sight. Her work may be initially enigmatic, but it invites interpretation.

Rosanne Raab is a curator and writer specializing in craft and design.

CITY/NATURE

Onishi Gallery, New York City
July 23–August 7, 2015

by Andrea DiNoto

The Onishi Gallery was established in 2005 to showcase the work of leading Japanese artists in various media, so it's not surprising that four of the six emerging artists in this, its first-ever jewelry show, were in fact Japanese. American-born gothophile Heidi Gardner and Lisbon native Edgar Mosa, known for his huge sculptural body ornaments, were the two outliers by birth, while Matsuyama Takeshi, one of Japan's modern masters of lacquerware, displayed his first, and possibly only, exploration of jewelry: sizable nuggets of amber (as pendants) micro-decorated with exquisite, traditional maki-e patterns and designs.

Between the stylistic extremes of Mosa and Takeshi, other members of the group produced mostly wearable objects, in which concepts of "nature" were rendered edgy and otherwise for a range of urban (and non) sensibilities. Goth design, by now a staple of mainstream jewelry and couture, also found dramatic interpretation in the skillfully articulated metal talons of Joji Kojima. One such work, Rosa, features thorns and a single silk red rose worthy of Lady Gaga (who in fact has worn his jewelry in performance). Kojima also demonstrated his mastery of mokume gane, the mixed-metal technique, both in his talons and a formidable skull ring carved from a solid block of melded silver, copper, and brass. He also presented a collection of eight plated brass butterflies, each exquisitely colored and each a different and presumably accurate rendition of a particular species; an homage, perhaps, to one of Japan's most revered and oft-depicted symbolic creatures.

LILIAM HIGA
Metropolis Ring, 2004
sterling silver, hematite
2 x 1 ¼ x ¼"

Gardner, a former ballet dancer from Buffalo, New York, who surrealistically photographs her cast-silver animal pelvis bones, vertebra, skulls, and such on bloody guts and innards—a paean to her stated love of the macabre—also delivered species-specific forms, along with renditions of sea creatures, or parts thereof; although it was unclear if her tiny sea urchins and sea horses had been cast from actual animal life. A cast silver bangle of fused vertebrae undoubtedly had been, and in its simplicity stood out as a forceful piece, both menacing and poignant, not to mention fashion forward.

The force was also with Edgar Mosa, whose idea of a pendant is a pasta-bowl-sized abalone shell suspended from an array of painted driftwood sticks. A Cranbrook graduate, Mosa uses both weathered and hand-carved wood for his oversized sculptural adornments, mainly neckpieces. Found fragments may be set in silver, painted with gold, or carved au naturel. The result is a kind of conceptual primitivism that emphasizes the beauty and elemental preciousness of a common material that both thrives and endlessly decays in threatened natural environments.

JOJI KOJIMA
Mokume-gane Ring, 2014
sterling silver, copper, brass
2.4 x 3.2 x 2.4 cm

Mosa's bombastic creations stand in stark contrast to Ayaka Nishi's delicate gold and silver replications of natural forms—honeycombs, cell structures, spider webs, dragonfly wings, branch coral, bone—all of which evoke her childhood environment of Kagoshima, Japan, a lush area located at the temperate confluence of the Pacific Ocean and the South China Sea. Nishi (now based in New York) also employs dyed leather to create petal-soft "fish scales," which are layered in biblike shapes for necklaces and earrings that would suit a mermaid. Nishi's many and varied, easily wearable designs (almost 50 were on view, a case of curatorial overkill) range from the simplicity of an opal-set "cell" ring to the subtle complexity of a remarkable necklace, in which sections of gold-plated silver honeycomb are strung with lava beads and a pendant of Satsuma Kiriko cut glass.

Just as one feels Matsuyama Takeshi's deep commitment to his heritage in his amber pendants (he uses only lacquer from Japan), Nishi's deconstructed forms remind us of the ethereal aspects of Japanese decorative arts, in which images of nature serve as touchstones to a highly evolved aesthetic. No such

AYAKA NISHI
Kiriko Glass Honeycomb Necklace, date
18k gold-plated sterling silver, lava beads, fire opal, citrin, Satsuma Kiriko cut glass
length 17 ½"

evocations exist in the work of the Brazilian-born Japanese designer Lilliam Higa, who goes by the commercial name Lillot. Her presentation consisted mainly of production pieces in various metals, several accented with Swarovski pearls. Higa, who was raised in Sao Paulo, and whose father was in the wholesale gem business, designs with international flair. (So why were there no examples from her first collection, "Tropicalis," an homage to the architect Oscar Niemeyer and the lush Brazilian landscapes?) Among her noteworthy designs was a *Gemala* choker of pleated rhodium-plated brass, reportedly inspired by a trip to India; *Metropolis,* a huge one-off architectural sterling silver ring set with hematite cabochons; and, if you looked closely, rings set with broken concrete, Higa's reference to New York City sidewalks.

Let's hope this show encourages Onishi Gallery to include jewelry along with its other crafts. The gallery states that what unites its artists is that "they embrace tradition in the creative process while ultimately shaping exquisite pieces in contemporary modes." Art jewelers—Japanese or otherwise—have long exemplified this vision.

Andrea DiNoto is a New York–based writer on art and design.

J. Fred Woell (1934–2015)

Tim McCreight
Metalsmith and Publisher, Brynmorgen Press

Fred Woell was a simple, complicated man. Or is it a complicated, simple man? To the hundreds of friends and students who knew him, Fred was a comfortable creature with a leisurely way about him that was reflected in his gentle speech, calm gestures, and ready smile. He could be counted on for an encouraging word and, when needed, a helping hand; he was never shy about leaning in to put a shoulder to the wheel. He was the kind of guy you'd want for a neighbor.

That said, he was passionate and able to hold strong opinions on politics, the environment, and education. Even a cursory review of his prolific output provides a survey of the ills of society, many of which came under his caustic eye. He was among the first American jewelers to use found objects for their evocative content. Whimsy was one of the tools in his arsenal, but he was able to make his feelings known directly too. Personal adornment is not always consistent with angry diatribes, which is perhaps why he also made wall panels, particularly in his later decades.

In the mid-1990s I worked with Fred's neighbor, Ron Pierson, to organize a workshop to experiment with a new product from Japan called Precious Metal Clay. The workshop included 15 master jewelers from around the country, including Fred. While it was a valuable experience in many ways, few of the participants went on to use PMC in their own work. This was not surprising because these seasoned artists had already developed their styles and working methods using traditional metalsmithing techniques.

Fred was the exception. Even though he had officially retired from teaching, he became a leading and very popular instructor in the new medium. Fred was never so tied to a technique that he prevented himself from trying something different. Of particular appeal was the fact that PMC was a brand-new medium; it had no fixed standards, expectations, or rules. Fred was not a big fan of rules. And, just as importantly, there was lots of room for innovation—and Fred was a great one for innovation. The gadgets and techniques he developed are too many to mention, but one that particularly impressed me was his process for making a hollow silver bead. He started by making a doodle with a piece of scrap wire, then draped a thin sheet of metal clay over the form and allowed it to harden. The wire armature was removed and a second sheet of clay was then configured to seal the bead. What to anyone else would look like a random curl of wire, Fred was able to see as the interior of a closed form. Not everybody can make a leap like that.

Though originally from the Midwest, Fred spent half his life in Maine and, at least in my mind, embodied the Yankee spirit of individualism, activism, and self-reliance. He would rather reuse something than throw it away, whether it was a license plate or a thumbtack. His gentle urging of each of us to take responsibility for ourselves is a lasting echo that resonates through studios around the world.

Fred Woell in his studio, 2010
PHOTO: PATRICIA WHEELER

Come Alive, You're in the Pepsi Generation, 1966
sterling silver, copper, brass, steel, glass, found objects
4 x 4 x ¼"
COLLECTION OF SMITHSONIAN AMERICAN ART MUSEUM

Claire Sanford
Metalsmith and Jeweler

I first met Fred Woell in 1983 when I moved to Boston to attend Boston University's Program in Artisanry. When I entered the program, I was largely unaware of who Fred was, and found myself a bit puzzled by the quiet, humble, somewhat cynical guy in the beige down vest. He turned out to be a gem, albeit one without a lot of flash or flamboyance. He was a teacher of rare generosity; he never held back and was always ready to help but, perhaps more importantly, he carefully and patiently tried to get his students to understand what he was doing, rather than mimic what he made. This attribute is hard to describe, but it's one of the aspects of Fred's teaching abilities that set him apart, and it's the aspect I most try to emulate when I teach. Fred's demos were legendary, always meticulously prepared and usually prefaced by "this probably isn't going to work…" but they always did work—beautifully.

I learned many useful techniques from Fred, but these skills were nothing compared to the worlds he opened up with his "attention to detail" slideshows, and the sense of playfulness he created by his odd-duck assignments or his discussions about the environment. His concern with the wasteful nature of our society wasn't just rhetoric. He would pick up trash and discarded cans on his daily walks, redeeming the cans for cash and bringing in to the department hundreds of dollars from an activity that most of us

believed in but couldn't be bothered with. Some of his best teaching (for those of us who took time to watch) was simply by his own example. Things like tackling the unglamorous jobs around the studio, jobs that needed to be done and that he never felt above doing; or doggedly making art when it seemed no one was noticing—and to keep on working because the art, not the recognition, was most important.

To try to describe Fred's legacy is complicated because the range of work he produced spanned so many decades and so many different genres. The work—as well as the person—could be acerbic, poetic, moving, or humorous, often all at once. He would examine both himself and the wider world and express, with simple poignancy, what he saw. I have also experienced his "zingers," those pointed and potent truths he could deliver with his funny crooked smile. In the end, I know that my life was changed for the better for having known Fred. I am a more patient teacher; I have an expanded vocabulary of materials; and I try to focus on my work rather than recognition to gauge my success. And I pay very close attention to detail. He is—and will be—greatly missed.

Matthew Drutt
Curator and President of DCAM

In the 1950s, Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns were inspired by an exhibition of paper and painted collages by Kurt Schwitters at Sidney Janis Gallery in New York. They immediately understood that the detritus of a culture could not only have cultural identity and significance, but that it had aesthetic value, which led to their groundbreaking works of the 1960s. At the same time, Edward Kienholz and Robert Indiana realized the importance of making American imagery humble, humorous, monumental, and iconic. Howard Kottler did the same with his ceramic plates, containing images of American cultural symbols and events. This was the 1960s. The country was fighting a war abroad and civil unrest at home, and certain artists realized that celebrating the heritage of America could be more a more valuable strategy in uplifting the national mindset than protesting against the government.

Into this context, J. Fred Woell introduced works in metal—brooches, pendants, statuettes, and spoons—at a time when metalsmiths were generally exploring the use of nonprecious materials and experimenting with techniques and, in many cases, ideas generated by their European counterparts. But the uniqueness of Woell's contribution to American art and the degree to which it transcended the work of his contemporary metalsmiths to reside comfortably alongside the artists mentioned above cannot be underestimated.

His 1966 brooch, *Come Alive. You're the Pepsi Generation*, is a seminal example of his absorption of Madison Avenue's attempt to hypnotize the American public into thinking that soft drinks can make you carefree, in spite of the turmoil both foreign and domestic. Now in the collection of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, the brooch has a wry criticism comparable to Andy Warhol's use of Coke bottles and Campbell's soup cans. Woell's wall plaque *Late Great Disposable Society* (1983) is nearly 20 years later a double-edged critique of American consumption and wastefulness. His statuettes of the 1970s, such as *Stop the War. I Want to Get Married* (1973), derive from collectible bronze icons of Americana, but he introduced a simultaneously humorous and deadly serious awareness of the toll that the Vietnam War was taking on domestic life in our country.

I grew up eating off of Woell's spoons, which, like the statuettes, took their cue from the collectibles aimed at tourists who traveled the country, as mementos of the cities and landmarks they had visited. But Woell transformed these pieces into nostalgic and analytical icons of the American past, present, and future, both compositionally and structurally. His interweaving of different materials not traditionally considered ornamental—pennies, postage stamps, copper, beer cans, soda can tabs, bullet casings—and antique-looking photographs contributed to a far-reaching vocabulary and powerful voice. He raged in his own modest way against the perils of repeating the lessons of history either directly or obtusely, on a scale and in a genre normally reserved for beautiful objects.

Woell's humble manner and critical vision are irreplaceable, as is his seminal position in the history of art. Like many of his generation who have left us, he will be sorely missed, but he leaves us with a powerful legacy that cannot and will not be forgotten.